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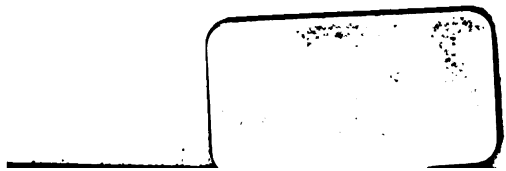

ESSAYS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M.D.

SELECTED AND EDITED,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF GOLDSMITH.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, the author of the Essays from which the present volume is but a selection, was born in 1728, at Pallas, a small parish in the county of Longford, in Ireland, of which his father, a younger son of a gentleman of good family, was curate. In his childhood he was nearly cut off by a severe attack of smallpox, which not only permanently disfigured his features, but left behind it a general weakness which lasted for many years; and so greatly checked his mental, as well as his bodily progress, that his schoolmaster generally regarded him as a backward, if not a stupid boy, though at times he showed a readiness, and even brightness, that led some of his friends to form a higher opinion of him, a judgment which his subsequent career amply acquitted of undiscerning partiality. After passing some years at school, first at Athlone, and afterwards at Edgeworthstown, he was removed to Trinity College, Dublin; but, though he had by that time outgrown his early weakness, he achieved no distinction, and was contented with an ordinary degree, which he obtained in 1749.

Being the fifth child of a large family, he had no patrimony to look to; and therefore, on quitting the University, it was necessary for him to choose a profession. His father had originally destined him for a commercial life, for which he was disinclined, and for which he was manifestly unsuited by his very unbusinesslike disposition. But now, by the urgent recommendation of one of his uncles by marriage, Mr. Contarine, vicar of Kilsnore, he was persuaded to offer himself as a candidate for Holy Orders in the diocese of Elphin. In his general respect for religion and virtue, and his kind charitable disposition, he would have displayed no little resemblance to the exquisite picture of the "village preacher" in the 'Deserted Village,' which he is believed to have drawn from his own father; but he had not followed Mr. Contarine's advice very willingly, and was probably very little disconcerted, when Dr. Synge, the Bishop, rejected him: according to his sister's account, because he had not yet reached the proper age; according to another report, which his fondness for gay dress renders by no means improbable, because he presented himself in the unclerical attire of a pair of scarlet breeches.[1]

Whatever may have been the cause of his failure, it did not indispose Mr. Contarine to make further efforts to assist him; and he procured him a private tutorship in the family of a Mr. Flinn, of Roscommon, but for some reason or other he soon wearied of the situation; it seems probable that he found he was expected to unite the duties of humble companion of the father to those of instructor of the son in a way that was irksome to his indepen-

[1] See No. XVII. of this selection.

dent spirit. Whatever may have been the cause, at the end of a few months he relinquished his post, and prepared to emigrate to one of our North American colonies, but the ship in which he had taken his passage sailed sooner than he had expected, leaving him behind; and, as his fare, which had been prepaid, had taken nearly all his money, he was reduced to great difficulties. It is characteristic of the impulsive good-nature which, to the end of his life, was a marked feature of his disposition, that, though he had only five shillings left to carry him back to his home, more than 100 miles distant, he gave half of it to a poor woman whom he met on the road, and who moved his compassion by a piteous tale of distress. He calculated, indeed, on obtaining a further supply from a friend whom he himself had often obliged in a similar way; but who, on being applied to, ungratefully turned his benevolence and subsequent distress into ridicule; and gave him no aid beyond the present of an oak stick, which, following (unconsciously, as we may suppose) the advice of Bishop Jewell to Hooker, he facetiously called a safe nag to carry him forward on his journey.[1] Goldsmith, as he told the story to his mother, "was in some doubt whether he should not, in the first instance, apply it to his pate." But his unworthy friend's head was saved by the arrival of another visitor; and Goldsmith contented

[1] He has introduced this incident into the adventures of George Primrose, many of which were taken from his own experience. "You are going, my boy," cried I, "to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you. Take from me the same horse that was given him by the good Bishop Jewel, this staff."—*Vicar of Wakefield*, c. 3.

himself with bidding him put the steed back into his own stable.

He now determined to study medicine; a science for which he seems at all times to have entertained a predilection; and crossed over to Edinburgh to study the profession. But he was not very well satisfied with the Scotch physicians, and at the end of the year he decided on removing to Leyden. And a comical distress, which delayed his voyage, saved his life; he quitted Leith in a small smack for Newcastle, expecting there to find a vessel bound for Holland, but some of the passengers, though natives of Scotland, held commissions in the French service; and, on his arrival at Newcastle, they were taken up on the charge of enlisting soldiers for the Pretender, and he was for a moment involved in the same accusation, and arrested also. But he was soon consoled for this enforced delay, since the ship in which he had intended to sail was wrecked on her passage, and every soul on board was drowned. However, he was speedily set at liberty to prosecute his voyage with better fortune; and in May 1753 he reached Leyden. But after a time the Dutch physicians satisfied him no better than the Scotch had done; and he abandoned his medical studies, and resolved to spend some time in travelling; not being daunted by his want of funds, because he had heard of a Danish scholar, "the famous Baron Holberg," who had recently traversed the greater part of Europe "on foot, without money, recommendations, or friends; a good voice and a trifling skill in music being the only finances he had to support an undertaking so extensive; so he travelled by day; and at night sang at the doors of the

peasants' houses to get himself a lodging."[1] Goldsmith was not a singer, but he played the flute with considerable taste and some skill; and his instrument was often put in requisition to pay for the hospitality which he received. Oft, as he says of 'The Traveller'—

> "Would the village praise his wondrous power,
> And dance forgetful of the noontide hour."

But he did not confine his visits to the poorer classes; at times when, by some means or other, his finances were in a better condition than usual, he mixed in higher society. In one of his letters he even speaks of having beheld the beauties who graced the Court at Versailles; and he was received as a visitor by Voltaire, of whose courtly manners, general ability, and, more especially, of whose wit and conversational powers, he conceived an enthusiastic admiration.

From France he proceeded to Italy, and at Padua he is generally believed to have received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. But he did not extend his travels to the Southern provinces, being apparently deterred by the signs of a speedy renewal of the war between France and England. And in 1756 he returned to England, which, except on the occasion of his detention at Newcastle, he had not yet seen. Apparently his means, from whatever source they had been derived, were now exhausted; for the variety of occupations in which, during the next few months, he engaged, is of itself a proof of the difficulty he found in maintaining himself. He became an usher in a school; then a chemist's assistant; then he set up as a physician in South-

[1] 'Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning,' c. 6.

wark, but found that there was a prejudice against Scotch or Irish practitioners, which effectually cut him off from all hope of lucrative practice; and the failure of his attempt involved him in greater distress than ever. There is a tradition that he joined a company of strolling players, which derives countenance from his description of the adventures of George Primrose; and many years afterwards, when fortune was smiling on him, he spoke of himself as having at one time "lived among the beggars in Axe Lane," a reminiscence which, if it had any foundation, must have referred to this period.

But, as has happened in other instances, this extremity of distress drove him into the path of fame. That

> "Magister artis, ingenîque largitor
> Venter."[1]

exerted the same influence over him in London that it had exerted over Persius seventeen hundred years before at Rome, and drove him as a last resource to seek a livelihood by his pen. Twenty years before Johnson, who was now enjoying the highest reputation among the literary men of the period, had begun as a writer in magazines; and publications of that kind had recently multiplied. Besides the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' there were the 'Monthly Review,'

[1] Translated by Dryden:—

> "Who taught the parrot human notes to try,
> Or with a voice endued the chattering pye?
> 'Twas witty want, fierce hunger to appease,
> Want taught their masters, and their masters these."—
> *Translation of the Prologue to Persius' Satires.*

And so, in 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' George Primrose is represented as telling his father how, among other expedients for obtaining a livelihood, he tried "to write for bread."

the 'Critical Review,' the 'British Magazine,' the 'Public Ledger,' and to all these he began to send in contributions, the merit of which was soon perceived by the reading public, and, consequently, by the publishers. By the beginning of 1759 he had become so well known that Dodsley, the leading publisher of the day, listened favourably to his proposals of a separate work, 'An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe,' which was very generally praised, though in it he had the boldness to assail the whole body of professed critics as a class of writers whose increase was both a proof and a cause of the decline of learning. "Learning," he contended, "may be distinguished into three periods: its commencement, or the age of poets; its maturity, or the age of philosophers; and its decline, or the age of critics." But, though this seemed like a deliberate challenge to that brotherhood, the challenge remained unanswered. The little volume was too highly praised for them to venture to attack it, and he soon had the proofs he most desired of the esteem in which it was held. He had no longer to seek admission on the staff of publishers and editors; they began to seek him. In the autumn of 1751 a publisher named Wilde projected a periodical called 'The Bee,' to consist entirely of essays, and of those all that have survived were the work of Goldsmith. And before the end of the year, Smollett, then in the height of his reputation as a novelist and historian, sought his co-operation in a magazine which, on the first day of 1760, he began to publish under such patronage as no other work before or since has ever received. George II., not generally a very enthusiastic

patron of literature, having granted his formal permission that 'The British Magazine, or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies,' should be announced as published "by the king's authority." To this magazine Goldsmith, while it lasted, was a frequent contributor; but with the publisher of another, which was first issued in the same month, under the title of the 'Public Ledger,' he made a more formal and permanent arrangement. For £100 a-year he undertook to furnish papers of an amusing character twice a week; and it is to this engagement is owing that series of papers on which his reputation as an essayist of the very first class is chiefly founded. More than one writer had put forth comments on passing events in the character of a foreign traveller. A Genoese, named Marana, had led the way with a volume which had recently been translated into English, under the title of 'The Turkish Spy.' The celebrated Montesquieu had imitated him in the 'Lettres Persannes.' And now Goldsmith, adopting the same idea, surpassed both the Italian and the Frenchman. Above a year before, in a sportive letter to one of his Irish friends,[1] he had imagined a Chinese philosopher in a future age commenting to his pupils on the excellence of some works which, though anonymous, were in fact the production of one Oliver Goldsmith, who flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, and lived to be 103 years old. And he now revived the idea, with the modification of making his Chinese philosopher a contemporary travelling in England, and communicating his remarks on what he saw to his friends at home. In

[1] Mr. Bryanton of Ballymahon. The letter is dated Aug. 14, 1758, and is given at length by Prior in his Life, i. 266.

the fourth number of the 'Public Ledger' he inserted a humorous preface on the character of Chinese authors and writings, apparently intended to show that their style closely resembled what that of a British Essayist was, or ought to be—"The Chinese are always concise; they are simple; they are grave and sententious." And the Preface was accompanied by the first of the traveller's letters. Two more appeared in the course of the next week; and they instantly became so popular as to form the chief attraction of the 'Ledger.' Such they continued to be through more than a hundred numbers; and though more than a century has elapsed since their first appearance, the applause which then greeted them has lost little of its warmth or vigour. When afterwards collected and reprinted in a separate volume they were entitled 'The Citizen of the World;' and this, though a far less descriptive or accurate title, is that by which they have since been generally known. A connected series of papers naturally takes higher rank than a single detached essay, however lively or sensible; and the plan of these letters admitted an infinite diversity of subjects and treatment. Juvenal had proposed to himself to embrace in his satires all that men do, or wish, or fear, or delight in, or are offended at,[1] and Goldsmith made the lucubrations of his philosophical traveller equally comprehensive. The wisdom and the virtue,

[1] "Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli."—i. 80.
Translated by Dryden:—
"Whatever since that golden age was done,
What human kind desires, and what they shun,
Rage, passions, pleasures, impotence of will,
Shall this satirical collection fill."

the weaknesses, the follies of those among whom for the moment his lot is cast, equally attract his notice, and in all his sentiments and language are such as become a philosopher; his censure, when he is compelled to blame, grave without bitterness; his laughter, when he cannot but laugh, hearty without asperity or rudeness.

The letters at once established his fame as an essayist of the very first class, and caused his acquaintance to be sought by all who felt or professed a love for literature—a body which at that time included no inconsiderable number of persons of fashion of both sexes. Burke was so connected with Dodsley, as the editor of the 'Annual Register,' that it is probable that he had already become acquainted with his countryman; and Dr. Percy, afterwards famous as the Bishop of Dromore, and the editor of the well-known 'Reliques of English Poetry,' had sought him out a year or two before, and now introduced him to Johnson, who by this time had come to be recognised as a supreme authority on all literary questions; and who was anxious for his acquaintance, regarding him as "one of the very first men we now had as an author; and a very worthy man too." (Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' i. 388.) The acquaintance speedily ripened into intimacy, and we are indebted to it for much of our knowledge of Goldsmith's habits and way of living, since he was too important a member of Johnson's society to be passed over by his biographer Boswell, though Boswell does not always place him in the most favourable light. The biographer was far from being the stupid person that Macaulay represents him; but it is very probable that Mr. Prior is right

in thinking him jealous of Goldsmith's large share of Johnson's friendship which he desired to monopolise. And Mr. Prior has certainly proved that some of the stories of foolish sayings and actions which Boswell attributes to him are entirely void of foundation. Johnson introduced him to Reynolds; and when, a year or two afterwards, these celebrated friends founded "The Club," which still flourishes as "The Literary Club," Goldsmith was invited to become one of the original members.[1] And he had hardly joined it when he established beyond all dispute his right to a high place in such a society, by the publication of 'The Traveller,' a poem which, if its comparative brevity compels us to rank it as but a cabinet picture when compared with other works of greater magnitude, yet for truth and purity of feeling, for correctness of imagery and delicacy of execution, need fear a comparison with few of its bulkier and more pretentious rivals. It was at once pronounced the finest poem that had been written since the death of Pope; and Mr. Prior points out that its plan is eminently entitled to the praise of originality, since it was a new feature in 'Travels' to dwell more upon the moral characteristics of the people of the different countries described than upon the local features and scenery. And he claims for its author the merit of being, in this respect, the precursor and model of Lord Byron, whose 'Childe Harold' "in all its leading points may be considered a kind of 'Traveller' on a more extended scale." ('Life of Goldsmith,' ii. 27.)

The fame he had acquired did not make him idle.

[1] See an account of "The Club" in Lord Stanhope's 'History of England,' vi. 478.

Indeed, his pen was still his only livelihood; and his labours as an essayist, an editor, and occasionally as a biographer, were unremitting. There were those who would fain have induced him to embark in an additional kind of work, which undoubtedly they would have found means to make profitable to him. At one time, we do not know the precise occasion, Mr. Basil Montague, a man well known in the political, literary, and fashionable world, was sent to him by the Government of the day, "to offer him *carte blanche* if he would write in support of the administration." To Mr. Montague's astonishment, and, indeed, indignation, he rejected the proposal, though accompanied with an offer of the most liberal payment. As Mr. Montague described his answer, "He was so absurd as to say, I can earn as much as will supply my wants without writing for any party; the assistance therefore you offer is unnecessary to me."[1] We may differ from Mr. Montague, and think that a man who, though living "in a miserable set of chambers in the Temple," could thus decline offers which must bind him to defend measures which in his heart, perhaps, he did not approve, but his support of which was to be munificently rewarded, displayed not "absurdity," but an independence of spirit which can hardly be too much admired. And, at all events, it will hardly be denied that, if a bargain had been struck which had given us, instead of 'The Deserted Village,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' and 'She Stoops to Conquer,' political pamphlets such as the 'False Alarm,' and 'Taxation no Tyranny,' the gain to the existing administration would have been more than

[1] Prior's 'Life of Goldsmith,' ii. 278.

counterbalanced by an incalculable loss to the literature of the country and of the world.

His boast that he could earn by his pen enough to supply his wants was not ill-founded. The admiration excited by his poem, coupled with the success of his 'Chinese Letters,' had given the London publishers so high an idea not only of his genius, but also of its versatility, that proposals for works of a wholly different kind crowded upon him, for all of which the publishers agreed to pay large sums. Mr. Prior has printed agreements between him and the projectors of different historical works, by which he was to receive a hundred guineas for each volume. His first work of the kind was a 'History of Rome,' in two volumes, which Johnson extolled as a plain narrative, "telling the reader shortly all he could want to know; and written in a style that would bear frequent re-perusal." And he maintained that, as such, it was far superior to "Robertson's cumbrous detail." It was followed by a 'History of England,' on a similar scale; and that by a 'History of Greece.' And the publishers expected even more from a 'Natural History of Animals,' which he undertook, and of which the first volumes were only published a few months before his death. It was not, perhaps, a subject with which he was especially qualified to deal, as his acquaintance with it was undoubtedly superficial; but Johnson, while allowing him no great knowledge of it, prophesied that "he would make it as entertaining as a Persian tale; he had the art of compiling, and of saying everything he had to say in a pleasing manner." And this, perhaps, is the utmost praise that can fairly be given to his his-

torical works. They were written in a lively, animated, and eminently pure style, and procured him the remarkable compliment of being appointed Professor of History to the Royal Academy, on the original establishment of that famous institution; but, though abridgements of them, which were also executed by himself, long kept their place as school-books, they have been superseded by other works of higher pretensions and greater research. Where he was unsurpassed was in works of a more original character, in which his fancy could expatiate without the restraint imposed by facts upon a historian. The success of 'The Traveller' naturally tempted him to seek fresh glory in the field of poetry; and it was soon known that he was employing himself on a poem founded in a great measure on his own early recollections. On none of his works did he ever bestow an equal amount of care and labour. We are assured that he employed two years in giving it the highest degree of polish; but, before he sent it forth to the world, a further proof of his versatility had been afforded by his appearance as the author of a novel, 'The Vicar of Wakefield.' Its publication forms quite an era in the history of fiction. In the plot, and in the management of the details of the story, there are not a few inconsistencies; to which, indeed, he may be regarded as pleading guilty in the short preface or advertisement which he prefixed to it, and which begins with the admission that "There are a hundred faults in this thing, and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity." The

verdict instantly given by the whole body of readers was, that it was "amusing," and something more. That it was, to borrow by anticipation the character given of it by one of the very few novelists who have surpassed it, Sir Walter Scott, "one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed." In his advertisement he had disclaimed for it pretensions to wit or humour; but the correctness of the disclaimer was not acknowledged by its readers. On the contrary, many of the opening chapters are instinct with the very richest humour; many, too, with a touching pathos. What is even more admirable, by reason of the qualities of an opposite character which disfigure the majority, and especially the most brilliant novels of that and the preceding generation, is the undeviating purity of the work in every part; in the conception of the whole, and in the execution of the details. And the combination of these qualities was at once recognised by the unprecedented demand which arose for it. It was not published till the end of March 1766. Before the end of the year it had run through three editions; nor was its popularity confined to this country. It was translated into French, Italian and German; and to this day it is frequently used in more than one foreign school as the book from which youthful pupils may be most profitably taught the English language.

The delight caused by 'The Vicar of Wakefield' had not subsided when the author came forward in a new character, that of a dramatist. Again, in the purity of his scenes, exhibiting a creditable difference from the comic writers of the preceding gene-

ration, whose aim appeared to have been to throw over the most shameless profligacy the protection of the most sparkling wit. Goldsmith's comedies are but two: 'The Good-natured Man' and 'She Stoops to Conquer.' And it is remarkable that neither of the theatrical managers of the day, Garrick or Coleman, was sanguine of their success. That of the former of the two was indeed but moderate; it contains more than one scene of great humour, but they are counterbalanced by others which can hardly be denied to be rather tedious. But the second, 'She Stoops to Conquer,' is put beyond the reach of criticism or disparagement by the simple fact, that above a century after its first representation, it is still a favourite, and in the metropolitan and country theatres is still constantly acted, and never without applause, and, what the author himself considered the surest test of the merit of a comedy, laughter. Indeed, next to the masterpieces of Sheridan, it will probably be very generally admitted to have been the best comedy produced in the last hundred years.

All these successes[1] only heightened the eagerness with which the long-promised poem was looked for; and at last, in May 1770, it came out under the title of 'The Deserted Village,' and it surpassed in popularity even the most admired of his previous works. Before the end of June three more editions were published and sold; and the favour which greeted its first appearance, being founded on real and solid beauties, can hardly be said to be diminished at the present day. Their brevity, as has

[1] 'She Stoops to Conquer' was, however, a later work than 'The Deserted Village.'

been previously confessed, may cause it and 'The Traveller' to be regarded but as cabinet pictures, when compared with longer poems in many books; but length is a very unsafe and delusive criterion of excellence; and, however they may surpass it in length, few poems in the language equal the real poetic feeling which pervaded the new poem; its ease and grace, or its truth to nature, equally conspicuous in the pictures drawn of scenery and of persons; of

> "The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
> The decent church that tops the neighbouring hill;
> The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made:"

or of "the village preacher,"

> "Passing rich with forty pounds a year."

The "village schoolmaster," of severer temper; "the long-remembered beggar"; and "the broken soldier," who, cheered by the vicar's sympathy,

> "Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
> Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won."

No doubt the poem owed much of its beauty and power to the fact that it was founded almost wholly on his personal experience. The village of Lissoy, near Ballymahon, where much of his youth was passed, and of which his brother Henry was the vicar, was the "Auburn" described in its opening lines; and the village preacher, who

> "Allured to brighter worlds and led the way,"

was drawn from his own father, with an affectionate admiration which the voice of the neighbourhood acknowledged not to have been undeserved.

He was still but in the prime of life when, in March 1774, he was attacked by an illness brought on apparently, in the first instance, by the sedentary habits to which his almost incessant literary labours compelled him, but aggravated into a dangerous fever, according to the opinion of his physician, by mental anxiety occasioned by pecuniary embarrassments. Poets are almost proverbially improvident; and of this portion of the poetic temperament, as Mr. Moore calls it, Goldsmith had his full share. Except in the article of dress, for which Mr. Prior has printed a set of rather amusing bills from his tailor, he does not seem to have been extravagant. Habits of gambling, to which in early youth he was accused of being addicted, he had long broken off; but both in his charities and his gratitude he was inconsiderately munificent. A tale of distress would extract from his pocket its last guinea; and he displayed his sense of obligation to the actor to whose performance of Tony Lumpkin he attributed much of the success of the play, by making him a present of ten guineas, of which he himself was probably in greater need than he to whom he gave it. Bodily suffering, thus aggravated by mental disquietude, did their work too surely, and on the 4th of April he died.

The grief of his friends was something more than that generally excited by the removal of a man of genius. It was such as could only have been called forth by the still more valuable qualities of the heart. Burke burst into tears on hearing of his death; and the great painter Reynolds was so affected that he laid down his brush, and was too much overcome to resume it for the rest of the day.

He was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, and over his grave the admiring affection of his friends erected a monument; a medallion, giving a faithful representation of his features, accompanied by an epitaph from the pen of Johnson, which, however eulogistic, did not go beyond the writer's honest conviction. It declared that there was scarcely any kind of composition that Goldsmith had not attempted, and not one which he had attempted in which he had not excelled. It was a grand panegyric to have been earned by a man who was only forty-three years old at his death. Nor was it a fleeting sentiment that thus honoured his memory with tokens of sorrow and admiration. A hundred years after he had passed away, Trinity College, where he had completed his education, resolved to honour itself by commemorating the genius of the most brilliant ornaments of literature that it had ever sent forth; and the great contemporaries, Goldsmith and Burke, were rightly chosen as the two men whose works had reflected the greatest honour on the University and the country; and when two bronze statues faithfully representing their features were placed in front of the college gates, the general voice, not only of their native Ireland, but of every nation by which the English language is spoken, pronounced that few compliments had ever been paid which reflected greater honour, not only on those who were the objects of them, but on those who paid them.

It would occupy too much of our space to enter here into an examination of Goldsmith's merits as poet, novelist, and dramatist. It is only as an Essayist, that we have to deal with him in this

volume; and it may not be out of place to preface our remarks on him in this character with a few general observations on the history and character of English Essay writing; especially since that class of composition is more cultivated at the present day than at any preceding period.

Johnson, in his Dictionary, defines an essay as "a loose sally of the mind; an irregular, undigested piece of composition;" and subsequently, as "a trial" (which indeed, seems to be the strictly etymological meaning of the word), quoting Glanville, who, in the preface to one of his own compositions, says—"this treatise prides itself on no higher title than an essay, or imperfect attempt at a subject." Johnson's definition of "a treatise" being "a discourse; a written tractate." It will hardly be said that this explanation is clearer than the word it professes to explain. But, from a general point of view, it may perhaps be laid down, though it is difficult to draw a precise line of distinction between the two, that a treatise differs from an essay in being more elaborate and copious, to use a modern phrase, more exhaustive. With this understanding, we may say that of the Opuscula of Cicero the *De Senectute* and *De Amicitiâ* are treatises, the *Paradoxa* are essays. Among modern nations the English and the French are those by which essay writing has been most studied, though the earliest modern essayist was the great Italian Machiavelli; a man, like our Goldsmith, of singular versatility, dramatist, poet and historian. His short compositions on Florentine Reforms; on the nature of Frenchmen; on the affairs of Germany, are clearly essays, not treatises; and some might be inclined to add to these his shrewd

commentaries on Livy. A Frenchman too, Montaigne, preceded the earliest of our English essayists; but no two writers could be more unlike than the Florentine and the Frenchman: Machiavelli being always as clear as he was profound in his views, close in his argument, and accurate in his language; while it cannot be denied that Montaigne is open to the charge that Goldsmith brings against him,[1] of having been, "during his whole life incapable of thinking connectedly." And it may be that he owes no small portion of the popularity which he enjoys among his countrymen to the contrast which his rambling style of thinking and writing, "without any decided plan, or distinct object, often ignorant whither he is going, but never in doubt whither he designs to go" (to quote the words of one who is not less a warm admirer than a shrewd critic), affords to the logical precision of thought and language, which are the more usual characteristics of his fellow-countrymen.

It was equally different from the style of the English writer, who in some degree may be called his contemporary, Francis Bacon, Lord St. Albans. Montaigne died in 1592, and Bacon published his first series of essays in 1597.[2] They were essays in the strictest sense of Johnson's definition; attempts at a subject; slight sketches of it; hints suggesting further reflections to the reader; brief but most pregnant texts to be pondered on, and enlarged upon by others. We may be at a loss whether to call Milton's 'Areopagitica' an essay or a treatise; and

[1] Review of Cicero's 'Tusculan Disputations.' Miscellaneous Works, vol. iv., p. 413.

[2] 'Biographie Universelle,' see Montaigne.

we should undoubtedly give the name of treatise to Dryden's compositions on 'Satire,' and 'Dramatic Poesy,' had not he himself entitled them essays. They are masterpieces of critical comment and exposition, evidently intended to exhaust the subjects with which they deal. And one of them, the 'Essay on Dramatic Poesy,' may be thought more especially designed to show this intention, since in it he has, to some extent, imitated Plato, representing his work as a discussion between several interlocutors.

The next, the eighteenth century however, is that which, in the history of our national literature, may be specially denominated the age of the essayists. Steele led the way. Periodical papers had, indeed, been previously published at intervals; most commonly on questions of policy (we do, however, not include political pamphlets in our ideas of essays), but in some instances on matters of taste, or morality;[1] but even the names of them and of their authors have for the most part perished, and indeed they probably did not deserve to live. But in the middle of the reign of Queen Anne, Steele projected a series on a new plan. He called it the 'Tatler,' and the name was indicative of the class of matter that was designed to be found in it. As he hoped to obtain for it a circulation in the provinces as well as in London, it was to appear three days in every week, those on which the post left London; and it was to diffuse the gossip of the great city, on points of fashion, on dress, on the charms of reigning beauties, in short, on every topic which engaged the attention of the idle or curious. He himself had already achieved a fair popularity as a

[1] See Macaulay's article on Addison.

dramatist, and in his new undertaking he sought the assistance of Addison, who as a literary man was as yet chiefly known as the author of a poem of very moderate merit, composed to celebrate the battle of Blenheim; but who could bring political influence to aid in promoting the circulation of any work in which he engaged, inasmuch as he was Chief Secretary in Ireland, and a member of the Irish Parliament. Addison embraced the proposal with eagerness; and the alliance so formed was very fortunate for the series, but less so for the original projector, since, as Steele himself confessed, the popularity of his own articles was greatly overshadowed by those furnished by his friend. The 'Tatler,' after lasting nearly two years, was discontinued to give place to the 'Spectator,' by the same authors, with the aid of other writers of inferior mark, who had also been occasional contributors to its predecessor. That also was continued for about the same length of time, when it gave way to the 'Guardian,' which, however, had no very long life; and after an interval of some years, and in a new reign, was succeeded by the 'Freeholder.' They had all a large, for the time an extraordinary circulation; but that which, in the eyes of the later generations, is the representative of all is unquestionably the 'Spectator;' and, according to the same judgment, the 'Spectator' is little more than Addison. As the personification of the 'Spectator,' the merits of Addison have been extolled by two enthusiastic admirers. Johnson closes the biographical sketch of him which is contained in the 'Lives of the Poets,' with praise of the "genuine Anglicism" of his style. "What he attempted he

performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity; his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to obtain an English style, familiar but not coarse, elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the study of Addison." This last sentence is a manifest imitation of Quintilian's eulogy of Cicero,[1] but we may suspect that our Doctor was led thus to borrow the eulogy of the great Roman critic for his own countryman, by a consciousness how widely the style of Addison differed from his own. For he was too acute and too candid not to be aware of the defects of his own; which on one occasion he described as having "too big words, and too many of them." Otherwise it might have occurred to him that one part of his panegyric, to a certain extent, disproves the other; for that a style, which never aims at being "energetic," must inevitably at times be "feeble." And we think it is generally felt that not unfrequently, especially in his moral essays, Addison is feeble, and, to use a modern expression, prosy. His critical articles, especially those on 'Paradise Lost,' are almost universally admitted to be unworthy both of the subject and of the author.

More recently, one of the most distinguished writers of the last generation, whose disposition, however, always led him to run into extremes, whether of praise or blame, while he fully endorses all Johnson's praise of his style, adds to it an enumeration of almost every conceivable excellence.

[1] "Ille se profecisse sciet cui Cicero valde placebit."

According to Lord Macaulay, in humour he surpasses Swift, and even Voltaire; in wit he excels Congreve; in ingenuity and liveliness of allegory he outdoes Lucian; in keen observation of, and sly satire on, the follies of the age, he equals Horace; in rich colouring he outvies the 'Arabian Nights;' in scenes from common life he rivals Goldsmith; and, to crown all, his "religious meditations will bear a comparison with the finest passages of Massillon." We will not quote an old verse which affirms that some praise is "satire in disguise," nor would we for a moment withhold our cordial assent to the assertion that the lessons of morality which Addison inculcates are always pure, that he observed varieties of character with penetrating shrewdness, and painted them with a delicate humour always under the control of good-nature and good-breeding. We will at present content ourselves with pointing out that these admissions, which are made with cordial willingness, do not involve the assertion that even in these qualities he had no equal.

Something less than forty years after the publication of the last 'Freeholder,' Johnson himself entered the same arena, with the 'Rambler' and 'Idler,' towards both of which he received so few contributions from other writers, and those so unimportant, that they may both be regarded as the work of him alone. But, though his reputation as a great thinker and talker created a fair demand for them at the time, they have long ceased to attract notice, and are known only to the curious. In truth his magniloquent and cumbrous fashion of speaking and writing, on no subject very well adapted to attract the generality of readers, was especially unsuitable

for that lighter class of literature, which if it cannot be read with ease is not likely to be read at all. Still, as they sold for a time, they stimulated imitation, and in the 'Life of Johnson' we see occasional mention of the 'Adventurer,' the 'Connoisseur,' and the 'World,' none of which however maintained an existence for more than a few months, and all of which have long been forgotten.

But between the publication of the 'Rambler' and the 'Idler,' Goldsmith, as we have seen, settled in London to earn a livelihood by his pen; and, as has been already mentioned, began with contributions of essays to different magazines; and the appearance of the earlier 'Chinese Letters' was nearly coincident with the issue of the last numbers of the 'Idler.' As we have already seen, their excellence was at once acknowledged. Johnson frankly owned the author's superiority to himself in that class of composition. And we may fairly infer from the tones in which he from time to time spoke of both, that he would have hesitated to assert his inferiority even to Addison. We have seen the merits which Lord Macaulay attributes to the latter, and, without attempting to institute any formal comparison between the two, we may fairly contend that many of the excellencies which Lord Macaulay attributes to the one are found in high perfection in the other also. If we seek for ingenuity and liveliness of allegory the tale of 'Azem the Manhater,' or the description of 'The Gardens of Virtue and Vice,' furnishes ample proof that in fictions of this kind Goldsmith need have feared no rivalry. If we desire some Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies, the description of the reception of the Chinese philosopher by the fine

lady, or of the way in which he found himself at the mercy of the puffing shopkeeper, will sufficiently gratify the most exacting taste for such delicate satire. It may be admitted that in none of his essays has Goldsmith drawn a character with the delicate discernment and humour and the elaborate finish which charm us in the portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley; but his pictures of the whole Primrose Family, of the amiable and venerable father, of the simple son with his gross of green spectacles, and of the outdoing of the monotonous gallery of the Miss Flamborough's, with an orange apiece in their hands, by the grand historical group which proved too large to pass through any door in the house, show that it was only because the plan of the 'Chinese Letters' did not admit of so detailed a delineation of a single character that they contain no counterpart to Sir Roger.

But besides these lighter graces, the essays of Goldsmith are rich in more solid excellences; they maintain throughout as high a standard of virtuous feeling and moral purity as is to be found in Johnson himself, who aimed especially at the fame of a rigid moralist; they are pervaded throughout with an instinctive honesty that never palters with truth. They display, moreover, a largeness of view, and especially an accuracy of political judgment, which few writers, if any, of the century, except, perhaps, Swift, had hitherto displayed. It has been often dwelt upon as a proof of Lord Chesterfield's political foresight that he discerned signs of the revolutionary spirit which was beginning to animate the French many years before it was developed in action. Lord Chesterfield was a professed politician, but in this

instance of sagacity he was not superior to the scholar in his garret, who, in one of the 'Chinese Letters,' is at least equally distinct in his utterance of the very same prediction, and who, in his advocacy of a relaxation of the penal laws, shows himself in advance of every statesman of his age; suggesting the very reforms which, above half a century afterwards, Romilly and Mackintosh made it their glory to promote. Johnson admitted that in style Addison did not wish to be energetic; but Goldsmith, not less easy and elegant, when ease and elegance are all that his subject demands, exhibits, when dealing with graver subjects, a terseness and vigour which perhaps no other writer of the century, except Swift, has equalled.

It may be added that, though we are here speaking of him only as an essayist, in other branches of literature neither Addison nor Johnson can be compared to him for a moment. Flattery itself could never place the 'Campaign,' nor even 'The Vanity of Human Wishes,' on a level with 'The Deserted Village;' nor 'Cato' or 'Irene' with 'She Stoops to Conquer;' nor compare 'Rasselas' to 'The Vicar of Wakefield.' Nor should it be forgotten in our estimate of Goldsmith's genius that all these great works were produced in fifteen years, and that the author had scarcely reached middle age when he was prematurely cut off. Literature has rarely sustained a greater loss, and probably no one who reflects on his genius and his industry will question the justice of Johnson's conclusion, that the longer he had lived the better he would have deserved his place among the great writers of the nation, in the great National Abbey.

Goldsmith himself, in one of his reviews, complains of the great difficulty of making a selection from works when all are equally good. His own great variety renders such a task one of especial difficulty in his case. In such a publication as the present it is impossible to avoid the omission of much that one would have desired to insert. But the aim of the Editor has been to give the reader an idea of the versatility of Goldsmith's genius, by showing the skill with which he deals with every variety of subject.

GOLDSMITH'S ESSAYS.

I.

The Fame Machine: a Reverie. From 'The Bee,' No. 5.

Scarcely a day passes in which we do not hear compliments paid to Dryden, Pope, and other writers of the last age, while not a month comes forward that is not loaded with invectives against the writers of this. Strange, that our critics should be fond of giving their favours to those who are insensible of the obligation, and their dislike to those who, of all mankind, are most apt to retaliate the injury.

Even though our present writers had not equal merit with their predecessors, it would be politic to use them with ceremony. Every compliment paid them would be more agreeable, in proportion as they least deserved it. Tell a lady with a handsome face that she is pretty, she only thinks it her due; it is what she has heard a thousand times before from others, and disregards the compliment: but assure a lady the cut of whose visage is something more plain that she looks killing to-day, she instantly bridles up, and feels the force of the well-timed flattery the whole day after. Compliments which we think are deserved, we accept only as debts, with indifference;

but those which conscience informs us we do not merit, we receive with the same gratitude that we do favours given away.

Our gentlemen, however, who preside at the distribution of literary fame, seem resolved to part with praise neither from motives of justice or generosity: one would think, when they take pen in hand, that it was only to blot reputations, and to put their seals to the packet which consigns every new-born effort to oblivion.

Yet, notwithstanding the republic of letters hangs at present so feebly together—though those friendships which once promoted literary fame seem now to be discontinued—though every writer who now draws the quill seems to aim at profit, as well as applause,—many among them are probably laying in stores for immortality, and are provided with a sufficient stock of reputation to last the whole journey.

As I was indulging these reflections, in order to eke out the present page, I could not avoid pursuing the metaphor of going a journey in my imagination, and formed the following Reverie, too wild for allegory, and too regular for a dream.

I fancied myself placed in a yard of a large inn, in which there was an infinite number of waggons and stage-coaches, attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, The Pleasure Stage Coach; on another, The Waggon of Industry; on a third, The Vanity Whim; and on a fourth, The Landau of Riches. I had some inclination to step into each of

these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world; and upon my nearer approach found it to be The Fame Machine.

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me, that he had but a few days ago returned from the Temple of Fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo: "However," says he, "I got them all safe home, with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope, and am now returned for another coachful."—"If that be all, friend," said I, "and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door: I hope the machine rides easy."—"Oh, for that, sir, extremely easy." But still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye, "Pray, sir, have you no luggage? You seem to be a good-natured sort of gentleman; but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire." Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff, but considering that I carried a number of the Bee under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendour of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it

before. "In short, friend," said he, now losing all his former respect, "you must not come in: I expect better passengers; but as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity."

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door; and since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place was a most whimsical figure indeed. He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word Inspector, which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. "Lord, sir!" replied the coachman, "instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter." Our figure now began to expostulate; he assured the coachman, that though his baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest corner of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the Inspectors was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have

no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming nearer, he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest; so, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadoon, and smelling to his own nosegay.

The person who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other returned, and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him, at present he could not possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the Temple of Fame. "What!" replied the disappointed poet, "shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue ——"—"Follow nature," returned the other, "and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than an empty name, it is possible you might

have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching."

This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable, figures I had seen; but as he approached his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage-door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again. "What! not take in my Dictionary?" exclaimed the other in a rage. "Be patient, sir," replied the coachman: "I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years; but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, may I presume to ask what it contains?"—"A mere trifle," replied the author; "it is called the Rambler."—"The Rambler!" says the coachman: "I beg, sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the Spectator; though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute."

This grave gentleman was scarcely seated, when another, whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of essays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the

contents. "These," replied the gentleman, "are rhapsodies against the religion of my country." —"And how can you expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question?" —"Ay, but I am right," replied the other; "and if you give me leave, I shall, in a few minutes, state the argument."—"Right or wrong," said the coachman, "he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine."—"If, then," said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage, "if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian; the last volume of my history met with applause."—"Yes," replied the coachman, "but I have heard only the first approved at the Temple of Fame; and as I see you have it about you, enter, without farther ceremony." My attention was now diverted to a crowd who were pushing forward a person that seemed more inclined to the Stage-coach of Riches; but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he, however, seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance. "Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned," says the coachman, "but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place?" —"None," replied the other, "except a romance; but this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention."—"You mistake," says the inquisitor; "a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and if you think fit, you may enter."

Upon our three literary travellers coming into the same coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion; when instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange! thought I to myself, that they who are thus born to enlighten the world, should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in whose pretensions I was sensible were very just; I therefore desired him to stop, and take in more passengers: but he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down; but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away; and for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

II.

On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur. From 'The Bee,' No. 6.

An alehouse keeper near Islington, who had long lived at the sign of the French King, upon the commencement of the last war with France, pulled down his old sign and put up the Queen of Hungary. Under the influence of her red face and golden sceptre, he continued to sell ale till she was no longer the favourite of his customers; he changed her therefore, some time ago, for the King of Prussia, who may probably be changed in turn for the next great man that shall be set up for vulgar admiration.

Our publican in this imitates the great exactly, who deal out their figures, one after the other, to the gazing crowd beneath them. When we have sufficiently wondered at one, that is taken in, and another exhibited in its room, which seldom holds its station long, for the mob are ever pleased with variety.

I must own I have such an indifferent opinion of the vulgar, that I am ever led to suspect that merit which raises their shout; at least I am certain to find those great and sometimes good men, who find satisfaction in such acclamations, made worse by it; and history has too frequently taught me, that the head which has grown this day giddy with the roar of the million has the very next been fixed upon a pole.

As Alexander VI. was entering a little town in

the neighbourhood of Rome, which had just been evacuated by the enemy, he perceived the townsmen busy in the market-place in pulling down from a gibbet a figure which had been designed to represent himself. There were also some knocking down a neighbouring statue of one of the Orsini family, with whom he was at war, in order to put Alexander's effigy, when taken down, in its place. It is possible a man who knew less of the world would have condemned the adulation of those barefaced flatterers; but Alexander seemed pleased at their zeal, and, turning to Borgia his son, said with a smile, *Vides mi fili, quam leve discrimen patibulum inter et statuam.*—"You see, my son, the small difference between a gibbet and a statue." If the great could be taught any lesson, this might serve to teach them upon how weak a foundation their glory stands, which is built upon popular applause; for as such praise what seems like merit, they as quickly condemn what has only the appearance of guilt.

Popular glory is a perfect coquette: her lovers must toil, feel every inquietude, indulge every caprice, and perhaps at last be jilted into the bargain. True glory, on the other hand, resembles a woman of sense: her admirers must play no tricks; they feel no great anxiety, for they are sure in the end of being rewarded in proportion to their merit. When Swift used to appear in public, he generally had the mob shouting in his train. "Plague take these fools!" he would say: "how much joy might all this bawling give my Lord Mayor!"

We have seen those virtues which have, while

living, retired from the public eye, generally transmitted to posterity as the truest objects of admiration and praise. Perhaps the character of the late Duke of Marlborough may one day be set up, even above that of his more talked-of predecessor; since an assemblage of all the mild and amiable virtues is far superior to those vulgarly called the great ones. I must be pardoned for this short tribute to the memory of a man who, while living, would as much detest to receive anything that wore the appearance of flattery, as I should to offer it.

I know not how to turn so trite a subject out of the beaten road of commonplace, except by illustrating it rather by the assistance of my memory than my judgment, and, instead of making reflections, by telling a story.

A Chinese who had long studied the works of Confucius, who knew the characters of fourteen thousand words, and could read a great part of every book that came in his way, once took it into his head to travel into Europe, and observe the customs of a people whom he thought not very much inferior to his own countryman in the arts of refining upon every pleasure. Upon his arrival at Amsterdam, his passion for letters naturally led him to a bookseller's shop; and, as he could speak a little Dutch, he civilly asked the bookseller for the works of the immortal Ilixofou. The bookseller assured him he had never heard the book mentioned before. "What! have you never heard of that immortal poet?" returned the other, much surprised; "that light of the eyes, that favourite of kings, that rose of perfection! I suppose you know

nothing of the immortal Fipsihihi, second cousin to the moon?"—"Nothing at all, indeed, sir," returned the other.—"Alas!" cries our traveller, "to what purpose, then, has one of these fasted to death, and the other offered himself up as a sacrifice to the Tartarean enemy, to gain a renown which has never travelled beyond the precincts of China!"

There is scarcely a village in Europe, and not one university, that is not thus furnished with its little great men. The head of a petty corporation, who opposes the designs of a prince who would tyrannically force his subjects to save their best clothes for Sundays—the puny pedant who finds one undiscovered property in the polype, describes an unheeded process in the skeleton of a mole, and and whose mind, like his microscope, perceives nature only in detail—the rhymer who makes smooth verses, and paints to our imagination when he should speak to our hearts,—all equally fancy themselves walking forward to immortality, and desire the crowd behind them to look on. The crowd takes them at their word. Patriot, philosopher, and poet are shouted in their train. Where was there ever so much merit seen? no times so important as our own! ages yet unborn shall gaze with wonder and applause! To such music the important pigmy moves forward, bustling and swelling, and aptly compared to a puddle in a storm.

I have lived to see generals who once had crowds hallooing after them wherever they went, who were bepraised by newspapers and magazines, those echoes of the voice of the vulgar, and yet they have long sunk into merited obscurity, with scarcely even an

epitaph left to flatter. A few years ago the herring fishery employed all Grub Street; it was the topic in every coffee-house, and the burden of every ballad. We were to drag up oceans of gold from the bottom of the sea; we were to supply all Europe with herrings upon our own terms. At present we hear no more of all this. We have fished up very little gold that I can learn; nor do we furnish the world with herrings, as was expected. Let us wait but a few years longer, and we shall find all our expectations an herring fishery.

III.

Custom and Laws Compared. From 'The Bee,' No. 7.

What, say some, can give us a more contemptible idea of a large state, than to find it mostly governed by custom; to have few written laws, and no boundaries to mark the jurisdiction between the senate and the people? Among the number who speak in this manner is the great Montesquieu, who asserts that every nation is free in proportion to the number of its written laws, and seems to hint at a despotic and arbitrary conduct in the present King of Prussia, who has abridged the laws of his country into a short compass.

As Tacitus and Montesquieu happen to differ in sentiment upon a subject of so much importance (for the Roman expressly asserts that the state is generally vicious in proportion to the number of its laws), it will not be amiss to examine it a little more

minutely, and see whether a state which, like England, is burdened with a multiplicity of written laws, or which, like Switzerland, Geneva, and some other republics, is governed by custom and the determination of the judge, is best.

And to prove the superiority of custom to written law we shall at least find history conspiring. Custom, or the traditional observance of the practice of their forefathers, was what directed the Romans as well in their public as private determinations. Custom was appealed to in pronouncing sentence against a criminal, where part of the formulary was *more majorum*. So Sallust, speaking of the expulsion of Tarquin, says *mutato more*, and not *lege mutatâ;* and Virgil, *pacisque imponere morem*. So that, in those times of the empire in which the people retained their liberty, they were governed by custom; when they sank into oppression and tyranny, they were restrained by new laws, and the laws of tradition were abolished.

As getting the ancients on our side is half a victory, it will not be amiss to fortify the argument with an observation of Chrysostom's: "That the enslaved are the fittest to be governed by laws, and free men by custom." Custom partakes of the nature of parental injunction; it is kept by the people themselves, and observed with a willing obedience. The observance of it must, therefore, be a mark of freedom; and coming originally to a state from the reverenced founders of its liberty, will be an encouragement and assistance to it in the defence of that blessing: but a conquered people, a nation of slaves, must pretend to none of this freedom, or these happy distinctions; having, by degeneracy,

lost all right to their brave forefathers' free institutions, their masters will in policy take the forfeiture; and the fixing a conquest must be done by giving laws, which may every moment serve to remind the people enslaved by their conquerors; nothing being more dangerous than to trust a late subdued people with old customs, that presently upbraid their degeneracy, and provoke them to revolt.

The wisdom of the Roman republic in their veneration for custom, and backwardness to introduce a new law, was perhaps the cause of their long continuance, and of the virtues of which they have set the world so many examples. But to show in what that wisdom consists, it may be proper to observe that the benefit of new written laws is merely confined to the consequences of their observance; but customary laws, keeping up a veneration for the founders, engage men in the imitation of their virtues as well as policy. To this may be ascribed the religious regard the Romans paid to their forefathers' memory, and their adhering for so many ages to the practice of the same virtues, which nothing contributed more to efface than the introduction of a voluminous body of new laws over the neck of venerable custom.

The simplicity, conciseness, and antiquity of custom gives an air of majesty and immutability that inspires awe and veneration; but new laws are too apt to be voluminous, perplexed, and indeterminate, whence must necessarily arise neglect, contempt, and ignorance.

As every human institution is subject to gross imperfections, so laws must necessarily be liable to the same inconveniences, and their defects soon

discovered. Thus, through the weakness of one part all, the rest are liable to be brought into contempt. But such weaknesses in a custom, for very obvious reasons, evade an examination; besides, a friendly prejudice always stands up in their favour.

But let us suppose a new law to be perfectly equitable and necessary; yet, if the procurers of it have betrayed a conduct that confesses by-ends and private motives, the disgust to the circumstances disposes us, unreasonably indeed, to an irreverence of the law itself; but we are indulgently blind to the most visible imperfections of an old custom. Though we perceive the defects ourselves, yet we remain persuaded that our wise forefathers had good reason for what they did; and though such motives no longer continue, the benefit will still go along with the observance, though we do not know how. It is thus the Roman lawyers speak; "Non omnium quæ a majoribus constituta sunt ratio reddi potest, et ideo rationes eorum quæ constituuntur inquiri non oportet, alioquin multa ex his quæ certa sunt subvertuntur."

Those laws which preserve to themselves the greatest love and observance must needs be best; but custom, as it executes itself, must be necessarily superior to written laws in this respect, which are to be executed by another. Thus, nothing can be more certain than that numerous written laws are a sign of a degenerate community, and are frequently not the consequences of vicious morals in a state, but the causes.

Hence we see how much greater benefit it would be to the state rather to abridge than increase its laws. We every day find them increasing; acts and

reports, which may be termed the acts of judges, are every day becoming more voluminous, and loading the subject with new penalties.

Laws ever increase in number and severity, until they at length are strained so tight as to break themselves. Such was the case of the latter empire, whose laws were at length become so strict, that barbarous invaders did not bring servitude but liberty.

IV.

An Account of the Augustan Age of England. From 'The Bee,' No. 8.

The history of the rise of language and learning is calculated to gratify curiosity rather than to satisfy the understanding. An account of that period only when language and learning arrived at its highest perfection is the most conducive to real improvement, since it at once raises emulation and directs to the proper objects. The age of Leo X. in Italy is confessed to be the Augustan age with them: the French writers seem agreed to give the same appellation to that of Louis XIV.: but the English are yet undetermined with respect to themselves.

Some have looked upon the writers in the times of Queen Elizabeth as the true standard for future imitation; others have descended to the reign of James I.; and others still lower, to that of Charles II. Were I to be permitted to offer an opinion upon this subject, I should readily give my vote for the reign of Queen Anne, or some years before that period. It was then that taste was united to genius;

and as before our writers charmed with their strength of thinking, so then they pleased with strength and grace united. In that period of British glory, though no writer attracts our attention singly, yet, like stars lost in each other's brightness, they have cast such a lustre upon the age in which they lived that their minutest transactions will be attended to by posterity with a greater eagerness than the most important occurrences of even empires which have been transacted in greater obscurity.

At that period there seemed to be a just balance between patronage and the press. Before it, men were little esteemed whose only merit was genius; and since, men who can prudently be content to catch the public, are certain of living without dependence. But the writers of the period of which I am speaking, were sufficiently esteemed by the great, and not rewarded enough by booksellers to set them above dependence. Fame, consequently, then was the truest road to happiness; a sedulous attention to the mechanical business of the day makes the present never-failing resource.

The age of Charles II., which our countrymen term the age of wit and immorality, produced some writers that at once served to improve our language and corrupt our hearts. The king himself had a large share of knowledge and some wit; and his courtiers were generally men who had been brought up in the school of affliction and experience. For this reason, when the sunshine of their fortune returned, they gave too great a loose to pleasure, and language was by them cultivated only as a mode of elegance. Hence it became more enervated, and was

dashed with quaintnesses, which gave the public writings of those times a very illiberal air.

L'Estrange, who was by no means so bad a writer as some have represented him, was sunk in party faction: and having generally the worst side of the argument, often had recourse to scolding, pertness, and, consequently, a vulgarity that discovers itself even in his more liberal compositions. He was the first writer who regularly enlisted himself under the banners of a party for pay, and fought for it, through right and wrong, for upwards of forty literary campaigns. This intrepidity gained him the esteem of Cromwell himself; and the papers he wrote even just before the Revolution, almost with the rope about his neck, have his usual characters of impudence and perseverance. That he was a standard writer cannot be disowned, because a great many very eminent authors formed their style by his. But his standard was far from being a just one; though, when party considerations are set aside, he certainly was possessed of elegance, ease, and perspicuity.

Dryden, though a great and undisputed genius, had the same cast as L'Estrange. Even his plays discover him to be a party man, and the same principle infects his style in subjects of the lightest nature; but the English tongue, as it stands at present, is greatly his debtor. He first gave it regular harmony, and discovered its latent powers. It was his pen that formed the Congreves, the Priors, and the Addisons, who succeeded him; and had it not been for Dryden, we never should have known a Pope, at least in the meridian lustre he now displays. But Dryden's excellences as a writer were not confined to poetry alone. There is in his prose

writings an ease and elegance that have never yet been so well united in works of taste or criticism.

The English language owes very little to Otway, though, next to Shakespeare, the greatest genius England ever produced in tragedy. His excellences lay in painting directly from nature, in catching every emotion just as it arises from the soul, and in all the powers of the moving and pathetic. He appears to have had no learning, no critical knowledge, and to have lived in great distress. When he died (which he did in an obscure house near the Minories) he had about him the copy of a tragedy, which, it seems, he had sold for a trifle to Bentley, the bookseller. I have seen an advertisement at the end of one of L'Estrange's political papers, offering a reward to any one who should bring it to his shop. What an invaluable treasure was there irretrievably lost by the ignorance and neglect of the age he lived in.

Lee had a great command of language and vast force of expression, both which the best of our succeeding dramatic poets thought proper to take for their models. Rowe, in particular, seems to have caught that manner, though in all other respects inferior. The other poets of that reign contributed but little towards improving the English tongue, and it is not certain whether they did not injure rather than improve it. Immorality has its cant as well as party, and many shocking expressions now crept into the language, and became the transient fashion of the day. The upper galleries, by the prevalence of party spirit, were courted with great assiduity, and a horse-laugh following ribaldry was the highest instance of applause, the chastity as

well as energy of diction being overlooked or neglected.

Virtuous sentiment was recovered, but energy of style never was. This, though disregarded in plays and party writings, still prevailed amongst men of character and business. The dispatches of Sir Richard Fanshaw, Sir William Godolphin, Lord Arlington, and many other ministers of state, are all of them, with respect to diction, manly, bold, and nervous. Sir William Temple, though a man of no learning, had great knowledge and experience. He wrote always like a man of sense and a gentleman; and his style is the model by which the best prose writers in the reign of Queen Anne formed theirs. The beauties of Mr. Locke's style, though not so much celebrated, are as striking as that of his understanding. He never says more nor less than he ought, and never makes use of a word that he could have changed for a better. The same observation holds good of Dr. Samuel Clarke.

Mr. Locke was a philosopher; his antagonist, Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, was a man of learning; and therefore the contest between them was unequal. The clearness of Mr. Locke's head renders his language perspicuous, the learning of Stillingfleet's clouds his. This is an instance of the superiority of good sense over learning, towards the improvement of every language.

There is nothing peculiar to the language of Archbishop Tillotson, but his manner of writing is inimitable; for one who reads him wonders why he himself did not think and speak it in that very manner. The turn of his periods is agreeable though artless, and everything he says seems to

flow spontaneously from inward conviction. Barrow, though greatly his superior in learning, falls short of him in other respects.

The time seems to be at hand when justice will be done to Mr. Cowley's prose as well as poetical writings; and though his friend Dr. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, in his diction falls far short of the abilities for which he has been celebrated, yet there is sometimes a happy flow in his periods, something that looks like eloquence. The style of his successor, Atterbury, has been much commended by his friends, which always happens when a man distinguishes himself in party; but there is in it nothing extraordinary. Even the speech which he made for himself at the bar of the House of Lords, before he was sent into exile, is void of eloquence, though it has been cried up by his friends to such a degree that his enemies have suffered it to pass uncensured.

The philosophic manner of Lord Shaftesbury's writing is nearer to that of Cicero than any English author has yet arrived at; but perhaps had Cicero written in English, his composition would have greatly exceeded that of our countryman. The diction of the latter is beautiful, but such beauty as upon nearer inspection carries with it evident symptoms of affectation. This has been attended with very disagreeable consequences. Nothing is so easy to copy as affectation, and his Lordship's rank and fame have procured him more imitators in Britain than any other writer I know; all faithfully preserving his blemishes, but unhappily not one of his beauties.

Mr. Trenchard and Dr. Davenant were political writers of great abilities in diction, and their

pamphlets are now standards in that way of writing. They were followed by Dean Swift, who, though in other respects far their superior, never could arise to that manliness and clearness of diction in political writing for which they were so justly famous.

They were all of them exceeded by the late Lord Bolingbroke, whose strength lay in that province; for as a philosopher and a critic he was ill qualified, being destitute of virtue for the one, and of learning for the other. His writings against Sir Robert Walpole are incomparably the best part of his works. The personal and perpetual antipathy he had for that family, to whose places he thought his own abilities had a right, gave a glow to his style, and an edge to his manner, that never yet have been equalled in political writing. His misfortunes and disappointments gave his mind a turn which his friends mistook for philosophy, and at one time of his life he had the art to impose the same belief upon some of his enemies. His idea of a patriot king, which I reckon (as indeed it was) amongst his writings against Sir Robert Walpole, is a masterpiece of diction. Even in his other works his style is excellent; but where a man either does not or will not understand the subject he writes on, there must always be a deficiency. In politics, he was generally master of what he undertook; in morals, never.

Mr. Addison, for a happy and natural style, will be always an honour to British literature. His diction, indeed, wants strength; but it is equal to all the subjects he undertakes to handle, as he never (at least in his finished works) attempts any-

thing either in the argumentative or demonstrative way.

Though Sir Richard Steele's reputation as a public writer was owing to his connections with Mr. Addison, yet, after their intimacy was formed, Steele sank in his merit as an author. This was not owing so much to the evident superiority on the part of Addison, as to the unnatural efforts which Steele made to equal or eclipse him. This emulation destroyed that genuine flow of diction which is discoverable in all his former compositions.

Whilst their writings engaged attention and the favour of the public, reiterated but unsuccessful endeavours were made towards forming a grammar of the English language. The authors of those efforts went upon wrong principles. Instead of endeavouring to retrench the absurdities of our language, and bringing it to a certain criterion, their grammars were no other than a collection of rules attempting to naturalise those absurdities, and bring them under a regular system.

Somewhat effectual, however, might have been done towards fixing the standard of the English language, had it not been for the spirit of party. For both Whigs and Tories being ambitious to stand at the head of so great a design, the Queen's death happened before any plan of an academy could be resolved on.

Meanwhile, the necessity of such an institution became every day more apparent. The periodical and political writers, who then swarmed, adopted the very worst manner of L'Estrange, till not only all decency, but all propriety, of language was lost in the nation. Leslie, a pert writer, with some wit

and learning, insulted the government every week with the grossest abuse. His style and manner, both of which were illiberal, were imitated by Ridpath, Defoe, Dunton, and others of the opposite party; and Toland pleaded the cause of atheism and immorality in much the same strain: his subject seemed to debase his diction, and he ever failed most in one, when he grew most licentious in the other.

Towards the end of Queen Anne's reign some of the greatest men in England devoted their time to party, and then a much better manner obtained in political writing. Mr. Walpole, Mr. Addison, Mr. Mainwaring, Mr. Steele, and many members of both houses of Parliament, drew their pens for the Whigs; but they seem to have been overmatched, though not in argument, yet in writing, by Bolingbroke, Prior, Swift, Arbuthnot, and the other friends of the opposite party. They who oppose a ministry have always a better field for ridicule and reproof than they who defend it.

Since that period our writers have either been encouraged above their merits or below them. Some who were possessed of the meanest abilities acquired the highest preferments, while others who seemed born to reflect a lustre upon their age perished by want or neglect. More, Savage, and Amherst were possessed of great abilities, yet they were suffered to feel all the miseries that usually attend the ingenious and the imprudent—that attend men of strong passions, and no phlegmatic reserve in their command.

At present, were a man to attempt to improve his fortune or increase his friendship by poetry, he would soon feel the anxiety of disappointment. The

press lies open, and is a benefactor to every sort of literature but that alone.

I am at a loss whether to ascribe this falling off of the public to a vicious taste in the poet or in them. Perhaps both are to be reprehended. The poet, either drily didactic, gives us rules which might appear abstruse even in a system of ethics, or triflingly volatile, writes upon the most unworthy subjects; content, if he can give music instead of sense; content, if he can paint to the imagination without any desires or endeavours to affect: the public, therefore, with justice, discard such empty sound, which has nothing but a jingle, or, what is worse, the unmusical flow of blank verse, to recommend it. The late method, also, into which our newspapers have fallen, of giving an epitome of every new publication, must greatly damp the writer's genius. He finds himself, in this case, at the mercy of men who have neither abilities nor learning to distinguish his merit. He finds his own composition mixed with the sordid trash of every daily scribbler. There is a sufficient specimen given of his work to abate curiosity, and yet so mutilated as to render him contemptible. His first, and perhaps his second, work by these means sink, among the crudities of the age, into oblivion. Fame, he finds, begins to turn her back: he therefore flies to profit, which invites him, and he enrols himself in the lists of dulness and of avarice for life.

Yet there are still among us men of the greatest abilities, and who, in some parts of learning, have surpassed their predecessors. Justice and friendship might here impel me to speak of names which will shine out to all posterity, but prudence restrains me

from what I should otherwise eagerly embrace. Envy might rise against every honoured name I should mention, since scarcely one of them has not those who are his enemies, or those who despise him, &c.

V.

Carolan: The Irish Bard. Miscellaneous Essays. From 'The Bee,' No. 5.

There can be perhaps no greater entertainment than to compare the rude Celtic simplicity with modern refinement. Books, however, seem incapable of furnishing the parallel; and to be acquainted with the ancient manners of our own ancestors, we should endeavour to look for their remains in those countries which, being in some measure retired from an intercourse with other nations, are still untinctured with foreign refinement, language, or breeding.

The Irish will satisfy curiosity in this respect preferably to all other nations I have seen. They, in several parts of the country, still adhere to their ancient language, dress, furniture, and superstitions; several customs exist among them that still speak their original; and, in some respects, Cæsar's description of the ancient Britons is applicable to these.

Their bards, in particular, are still held in great veneration among them; those traditional heralds are invited to every funeral, in order to fill up the intervals of the howl with their songs and harps. In these they rehearse the actions of the ancestors of

the deceased, bewail the bondage of their country under the English government, and generally conclude with advising the young men and maidens to make the best use of their time; for they will soon, for all their present bloom, be stretched under the table, like the dead body before them.

Of all the bards this country ever produced, the last and the greatest was CAROLAN THE BLIND. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp. The original natives never mention his name without rapture; both his poetry and music they have by heart; and even some of the English themselves, who have been transplanted there, find his music extremely pleasing. A song beginning,

"O'Rourke's noble fare will ne'er be forgot,"

translated by Dean Swift, is of his composition; which, though perhaps by this means the best known of his pieces, is yet by no means the most deserving. His songs in general may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the same flights of imagination; and are composed (I do not say written, for he could not write) merely to flatter some man of fortune upon some excellence of the same kind. In these one man is praised for the excellence of his stable, as in Pindar, another for his hospitality, a third for the beauty of his wife and children, and a fourth for the antiquity of his family. Whenever any of the original natives of distinction were assembled at feasting or revelling, Carolan was generally there, where he was always ready with his harp to celebrate their praises. He seemed by nature formed for his profession; for as

he was born blind, so also he was possessed of a most astonishing memory, and a facetious turn of thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction. Being once at the house of an Irish nobleman, where there was a musician present who was eminent in the profession, Carolan immediately challenged him to a trial of skill. To carry the jest forward, his lordship persuaded the musician to accept the challenge, and he accordingly played over on his fiddle the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. Carolan, immediately taking up his harp, played over the whole piece after him, without missing a note, though he had never heard it before, which produced some surprise; but their astonishment increased, when he assured them he could make a concerto in the same taste himself, which he instantly composed; and that with such spirit and elegance, that it may compare (for we have it still) with the finest compositions of Italy.

His death was not less remarkable than his life. Homer was never more fond of a glass than he; he would drink whole pints of usquebaugh, and, as he used to think, without any ill consequence. His intemperance, however, in this respect, at length brought on an incurable disorder; and when just at the point of death, he called for a cup of his beloved liquor, [Those who were standing round him, surprised at the demand, endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary; but he persisted, and when the bowl was brought to him attempted to drink, but could not; wherefore, giving away the bowl, he observed, with a smile, that it would be hard if two such friends as he and the cup should part at least without kissing, and then expired.

VI.

National Concord. From 'The Bee,' No. 15.

I take the liberty to communicate to the public a few loose thoughts upon a subject which, though often handled, has not yet in my opinion been fully discussed,—I mean national concord, or unanimity, which in this kingdom has been generally considered as a bare possibility that existed nowhere but in speculation. Such an union is perhaps neither to be expected nor wished for in a country whose liberty depends rather upon the genius of the people than upon any precautions which they have taken in a constitutional way for the guard and preservation of this inestimable blessing.

There is a very honest gentleman with whom I have been acquainted these thirty years, during which there has not been one speech uttered against the ministry in parliament, nor struggle at an election for a burgess to serve in the House of Commons, nor a pamphlet published in opposition to any measure of the administration, nor even a private censure passed in his hearing upon the misconduct of any person concerned in public affairs, but he is immediately alarmed, and loudly exclaims against such factious doings, in order to set the people by the ears together at such a delicate juncture. "At any other time," says he, "such opposition might not be improper, and I don't question the facts that are alleged; but at this crisis, sir, to inflame the nation—the man deserves to be punished as a traitor to his country." In a word, according to this gentle-

man's opinion, the nation has been in a violent crisis at any time these thirty years; and were it possible for him to live another century, he would never find any period at which a man might with safety impugn the infallibility of a minister.

The case is no more than this: my honest friend has invested his whole fortune in the stocks, on Government security, and trembles at every whiff of popular discontent. Were every British subject of the same tame and timid disposition, Magna Charta would be wholly disregarded by an ambitious prince, and the liberties of England expire without a groan. Opposition, when restrained within due bounds, is the salubrious gale that ventilates the opinions of the people, which might otherwise stagnate into the most abject submission. It may be said to purify the atmosphere of politics; to dispel the gross vapours raised by the influence of ministerial artifice and corruption, until the constitution, like a mighty rock, stands full disclosed to the view of every individual who dwells within the shade of its protection. Even when this gale blows with augmented violence, it generally tends to the advantage of the commonwealth: it wakes the apprehension, and consequently arouses all the faculties of the pilot at the helm, who redoubles his vigilance and caution, exerts his utmost skill, and, becoming acquainted with the nature of the navigation, in a little time learns to suit his canvas to the roughness of the sea and the trim of the vessel. Without these intervening storms of opposition to exercise his faculties, he would become enervated, negligent, and presumptuous; and in the wantonness of his power, trusting to some

deceitful calm, perhaps hazard a step that would wreck the constitution. Yet there is a measure in all things. A moderate frost will fertilise the glebe with nitrous particles, and destroy the eggs of pernicious insects that prey upon the fancy of the year: but if this frost increases in severity and duration, it will chill the seeds, and even freeze up the roots of vegetables; it will check the bloom, nip the buds, and blast all the promise of the spring. The vernal breeze that drives the fog before it, that brushes the cobwebs from the boughs, that fans the air, and fosters vegetation, if augmented to a tempest, will strip the leaves, overthrow the tree, and desolate the garden. The auspicious gale before which the trim vessel ploughs the bosom of the sea, while the mariners are kept alert in duty and in spirits, if converted into a hurricane, overwhelms the crew with terror and confusion. The sails are rent, the cordage cracked, the masts give way; the master eyes the havoc with mute despair, and the vessel founders in the storm. Opposition, when confined within its proper channels, sweeps away those beds of soil and banks of sand which corruptive power had gathered; but when it overflows its banks, and deluges the plain, its course is marked by ruin and devastation.

The opposition necessary in a free state, like that of Great Britain, is not at all incompatible with that national concord which ought to unite the people on emergencies in which the general safety is at stake. It is the jealousy of patriotism, not the rancour of party—the warmth of candour, not the virulence of hate—a transient dispute among friends, not an implacable feud that admits of no reconciliation.

The history of all ages teems with the fatal effects of internal discord; and were history and tradition annihilated, common sense would plainly point out the mischiefs that must arise from want of harmony and national union. Every schoolboy can have recourse to the fable of the rods, which, when united in a bundle, no strength could bend, but when separated into single twigs, a child could break with ease.

VII.

ASEM THE MAN-HATER; OR, A VINDICATION OF THE WISDOM OF GOD IN THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, AN EASTERN TALE. FROM 'THE BEE,' No. 19.

WHERE Tauris lifts its head above the storm, and presents nothing to the sight of the distant traveller but a prospect of nodding rocks, falling torrents, and all the variety of tremendous nature; on the bleak bosom of this frightful mountain, secluded from society, and detesting the ways of men, lived Asem the man-hater.

Asem had spent his youth with men, had shared in their amusements, and had been taught to love his fellow-creatures with the most ardent affection; but, from the tenderness of his disposition, he exhausted all his fortune in relieving the wants of the distressed. The petitioner never sued in vain; the weary traveller never passed his door; he only desisted from doing good when he had no longer the power of relieving.

For a fortune thus spent in benevolence he expected a grateful return from those he had formerly

relieved, and made his application with confidence of redress; the ungrateful world soon grew weary of his importunity; for pity is but a short-lived passion. He soon, therefore, began to view mankind in a very different light from that in which he had before beheld them; he perceived a thousand vices he had never before suspected to exist; wherever he turned, ingratitude, dissimulation, and treachery contributed to increase his detestation of them. Resolved, therefore, to continue no longer in a world which he hated, and which repaid his detestation with contempt, he retired to this region of sterility, in order to brood over his resentment in solitude, and converse with the only honest heart he knew—namely, with his own.

A cave was his only shelter from the inclemency of the weather; fruits, gathered with difficulty from the mountain's side, his only food; and his drink was fetched, with danger and toil, from the headlong torrent. In this manner he lived, sequestered from society, passing the hours in meditation, and sometimes exulting that he was able to live independent of his fellow-creatures.

At the foot of the mountain an extensive lake displayed its glassy bosom, reflecting on its broad surface the impending horrors of the mountain. To this capacious mirror he would sometimes descend, and, reclining on its steep banks, cast an eager look on the smooth expanse that lay before him. "How beautiful," he often cried, "is Nature! How lovely even in her wildest scenes! How finely contrasted is the level plain that lies beneath me with yon awful pile that hides its tremendous head in clouds! But the beauty of these scenes is no way comparable

with their utility; hence an hundred rivers are supplied, which distribute health and verdure to the various countries through which they flow. Every part of the universe is beautiful, just, and wise; but man, vile man, is a solecism in Nature, the only monster in the creation. Tempests and whirlwinds have their use; but vicious, ungrateful man is a blot in the fair page of universal beauty. Why was I born of that detested species, whose vices are almost a reproach to the wisdom of the divine Creator? Were men entirely free from vice, all would be uniformity, harmony, and order. A world of moral rectitude should be the result of a perfect moral agent. Why, why then, O Alla! must I be thus confined in darkness, doubt, and despair?"

Just as he uttered the word despair, he was going to plunge into the lake beneath him, at once to satisfy his doubts, and put a period to his anxiety, when he perceived a most majestic being walking on the surface of the water, and approaching the bank on which he stood. So unexpected an object at once checked his purpose; he stopped, contemplated, and fancied he saw something awful and divine in his aspect.

"Son of Adam," cried the Genius, "stop thy rash purpose; the Father of the Faithful has seen thy justice, thy integrity, thy miseries, and hath sent me to afford and administer relief. Give me thine hand, and follow without trembling wherever I shall lead; in me behold the Genius of Conviction, kept by the great Prophet, to turn from their errors those who go astray, not from curiosity, but a rectitude of intention. Follow me and be wise."

Asem immediately descended upon the lake, and

his guide conducted him along the surface of the water, till, coming near the centre of the lake, they both began to sink; the waters closed over their heads; they descended several hundred fathoms, till Asem, just ready to give up his life as inevitably lost, found himself, with his celestial guide, in another world, at the bottom of the waters, where human foot had never trod before. His astonishment was beyond description, when he saw a sun like that he had left, a serene sky over his head, and blooming verdure under his feet.

"I plainly perceive your amazement," said the Genius; "but suspend it for a while. This world was formed by Alla, at the request, and under the inspection of our great Prophet, who once entertained the same doubts which filled your mind when I found you, and from the consequence of which you were so lately rescued. The rational inhabitants of this world are formed agreeable to your own ideas; they are absolutely without vice. In other respects it resembles your earth, but differs from it in being wholly inhabited by men who never do wrong. If you find this world more agreeable than that you so lately left, you have free permission to spend the remainder of your days in it; but permit me for some time to attend you, that I may silence your doubts, and make you better acquainted with your company and your new habitation."

"A world without vice! Rational beings without immorality!" cried Asem, in a rapture; "I thank thee, O Alla! who hast at length heard my petitions; this, this indeed will produce happiness, ecstasy, and ease. Oh, for an immortality, to spend it among men who are incapable of ingratitude, in-

justice, fraud, violence, and a thousand other crimes that render Society miserable!"

"Cease thine exclamations," replied the Genius. "Look around thee; reflect on every object and action before us, and communicate to me the result of thine observations. Lead wherever you think proper, I shall be your attendant and instructor." Asem and his companion travelled on in silence for some time, the former being entirely lost in astonishment; but at last recovering his former serenity, he could not help observing, that the face of the country bore a near resemblance to that he had left, except that this subterranean world still seemed to retain its primeval wildness.

"Here," cried Asem, "I perceive animals of prey and others that seem only designed for their subsistence; it is the very same in the world over our heads. But had I been permitted to instruct our Prophet, I would have removed this defect, and formed no voracious or destructive animals, which only prey on the other parts of the creation."—"Your tenderness for inferior animals is, I find, remarkable," said the Genius, smiling. "But, with regard to meaner creatures, this world exactly resembles the other, and, indeed, for obvious reasons; for the earth can support a more considerable number of animals by their thus becoming food for each other, than if they had lived entirely on her vegetable productions. So that animals of different natures thus formed, instead of lessening their multitude, subsist in the greatest number possible. But let us hasten on to the inhabited country before us, and see what that offers for instruction."

They soon gained the utmost verge of the forest,

and entered the country inhabited by men without vice; and Asem anticipated in idea the rational delight he hoped to experience in such an innocent Society. But they had scarcely left the confines of the wood, when they beheld one of the inhabitants flying with hasty steps, and terror in his countenance, from an army of squirrels, that closely pursued him. "Heavens!" cried Asem, "why does he fly? What can he fear from animals so contemptible?" He had scarcely spoken, when he perceived two dogs pursuing another of the human species, who with equal terror and haste attempted to avoid them. "This," cried Asem to his guide, "is truly surprising; nor can I conceive the reason for so strange an action."—"Every species of animals," replied the Genius, "has of late grown very powerful in this country; for the inhabitants, at first, thinking it unjust to use either fraud or force in destroying them, they have insensibly increased, and now frequently ravage their harmless frontiers." —"But they should have been destroyed," cried Asem; "you see the consequence of such neglect." —"Where is, then, that tenderness you so lately expressed for subordinate animals?" replied the Genius, smiling; "you seem to have forgot that branch of justice."—"I must acknowledge my mistake," returned Asem; "I am now convinced that we must be guilty of tyranny and injustice to the brute creation, if we would enjoy the world ourselves. But let us no longer observe the duty of man to these irrational creatures, but survey their connections with one another."

As they walked farther up the country, the more he was surprised to see no vestiges of handsome

houses, no cities, or any mark of elegant design. His conductor, perceiving his surprise, observed, that the inhabitants of this new world were perfectly content with their ancient simplicity; each had a house, which, though homely, was sufficient to lodge his little family; they were too good to build houses, which could only increase their own pride, and the envy of the spectators; what they built was for convenience, and not for show. "At least, then," said Asem, "they have neither architects, painters, nor statuaries in their society; but these are idle arts, and may be spared. However, before I spend much more time here, you should have my thanks for introducing me into the society of some of their wisest men; there is scarce any pleasure to me equal to a refined conversation; there is nothing of which I am so much enamoured as wisdom."—"Wisdom!" replied his instructor; "how ridiculous! We have no wisdom here, for we have no occasion for it; true wisdom is only a knowledge of our own duty, and the duty of others to us; but of what use is such wisdom here? Each intuitively performs what is right in himself, and expects the same from others. If by wisdom you should mean vain curiosity and empty speculation, as such pleasures have their origin in vanity, luxury, or avarice, we are too good to pursue them."—"All this may be right," says Asem; "but methinks I observe a solitary disposition prevail among the people; each family keeps separately within their own precincts, without society, or without intercourse."—"That indeed is true," replied the other; "here is no established society, nor should there be any; all societies are made either through fear or friendship; the people we are

among are too good to fear each other; and there are no motives to private friendship, where all are equally meritorious."—"Well, then," said the sceptic; "as I am to spend my time here, if I am to have neither the polite arts, nor wisdom, nor friendship, in such a world, I should be glad at least of an easy companion, who may tell me his thoughts, and to whom I may communicate mine."—"And to what purpose should either do this?" says the Genius; "flattery or curiosity are vicious motives, and never allowed of here; and wisdom is out of the question."

"Still, however," said Asem, "the inhabitants must be happy; each is contented with his own possessions, nor avariciously endeavours to heap up more than is necessary for his own subsistence; each has therefore leisure for pitying those that stand in need of his compassion." He had scarce spoken, when his ears were assaulted with the lamentations of a wretch who sat by the way-side, and in the most deplorable distress seemed gently to murmur at his own misery. Asem immediately ran to his relief, and found him in the last stage of a consumption. "Strange," cried the son of Adam, "that men who are free from vice should thus suffer so much misery without relief!"—"Be not surprised," said the wretch who was dying; "would it not be the utmost injustice for beings who have only just sufficient to support themselves, and are content with a bare subsistence, to take it from their own mouths to put it into mine? They never are possessed of a single meal more than is necessary, and what is barely necessary cannot be dispensed with."—"They should have been supplied with more than is necessary," cried Asem—"and yet I

contradict my own opinion but a moment before —all is doubt, perplexity, and confusion. Even the want of ingratitude is no virtue here, since they never received a favour. They have, however another excellence yet behind; the love of their country is still, I hope, one of their darling virtues." —"Peace, Asem," replied the Guardian, with a countenance not less severe than beautiful; nor forfeit all thy pretensions to wisdom; the same selfish motives by which we prefer our own interests to that of others, induce us to regard our country preferably to that of another. Nothing less than universal benevolence is free from vice, and that you see is practised here."—"Strange!" cries the disappointed pilgrim, in an agony of distress; "what sort of a world am I now introduced to? There is scarce a single virtue, but that of temperance, which they practise; and in that they are no way superior to the very brute creation. There is scarce an amusement which they enjoy; fortitude, liberality, friendship, wisdom, conversation, and love of country, all are virtues entirely unknown here; thus it seems that to be unacquainted with vice is not to know virtue. Take me, O my Genius! back to that very world which I have despised; a world which has Alla for its contriver is much more wisely formed than that which has been projected by Mahomet. Ingratitude, contempt, and hatred, I can now suffer, for perhaps I have deserved them. When I arraigned the wisdom of Providence, I only showed my own ignorance; henceforth let me keep from vice myself, and pity it in others."

He had scarce ended, when the Genius, assuming an air of terrible complacency, called all his

thunders around him, and vanished in a whirlwind. Asem, astonished at the terror of the scene, looked for his imaginary world; when, casting his eyes around, he perceived himself in the very situation, and in the very place, where he first began to repine and despair; his right foot had been just advanced to take the fatal plunge, nor had it been yet withdrawn; so instantly did Providence strike the series of truths just imprinted on his soul. He now departed from the water side in tranquillity; and, leaving his horrid mansion, travelled to Segestan, his native city, where he diligently applied himself to commerce, and put in practice that wisdom he had learned in solitude. The frugality of a few years soon produced opulence; the number of his domestics increased; his friends came to him from every part of the city; nor did he receive them with disdain; and a youth of misery was concluded with an old age of elegance, affluence, and ease.

VIII.

The Origin of Poetry. From 'The Bee,' No 19.

The study of polite literature is generally supposed to include all the liberal arts of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, eloquence, and architecture. All these are founded on imitation; and all of them mutually assist and illustrate each other. But as painting, sculpture, music, and architecture cannot be perfectly attained without long practice of manual operation, we shall distinguish them from poetry and eloquence, which depend entirely on the faculties of the mind; and on these last, as on the

arts which immediately constitute the Belles Lettres, employ our attention in the present inquiry; or, if it should run to a greater length than we propose, it shall be confined to poetry alone; a subject that comprehends in its full extent the province of taste, or what is called polite literature; and differs essentially from eloquence, both in its end and origin.

Poetry sprang from ease, and was consecrated to pleasure; whereas eloquence arose from necessity, and aims at conviction. When we say poetry sprang from ease, perhaps we ought to except that species of it which owed its rise to inspiration and enthusiasm, and properly belonged to the culture of religion. In the first ages of mankind, and even in the original state of Nature, the unlettered mind must have been struck with sublime conceptions, with admiration and awe, by those great phenomena which, though every day repeated, can never be viewed without internal emotion. Those would break forth in exclamations expressive of the passion produced, whether surprise or gratitude, terror or exultation. The rising, the apparent course, the setting, and seeming renovation of the sun; the revolution of light and darkness; the splendour, change, and circuit of the moon, and the canopy of heaven bespangled with stars, must have produced expressions of wonder and adoration. "O glorious luminary! great eye of the world! source of that light which guides my steps! of that heat which warms me when chilled with cold! of that influence which cheers the face of Nature! whither dost thou retire every evening with the shade? Whence dost thou spring every morning with renovated lustre and never-fading glory? Art not thou the ruler, the

creator, the god of all that I behold? I adore thee, as thy child, thy slave, thy suppliant! I crave thy protection, and the continuance of thy goodness! Leave me not to perish with cold, or to wander solitary in utter darkness! Return, return, after thy wonted absence; drive before thee the gloomy clouds that would obscure the face of Nature. The birds begin to warble, and every animal is filled with gladness at thy approach; even the trees, the herbs, and the flowers seem to rejoice with fresher beauties, and send forth a grateful incense to thy power, whence their origin is derived!" A number of individuals, inspired with the same ideas, would join in these orisons, which would be accompanied with corresponding gesticulations of the body. They would be improved by practice, and grow regular from repetition. The sounds and gestures would naturally fall into measured cadence. Thus the song and dance would be produced; and, a system of worship being formed, the muse would be consecrated to the purposes of religion.

Hence those forms of thanksgivings and litanies of supplication with which the religious rites of all nations, even the most barbarous, are at this day celebrated in every quarter of the known world. Indeed, this is a circumstance in which all nations surprisingly agree how much soever they may differ in every other article of laws, customs, manners, and religion. The ancient Egyptians celebrated the festivals of their god Apis with hymns and dances. The superstition of the Greeks, partly derived from the Egyptians, abounded with poetical ceremonies, such as choruses and hymns, sung and danced at their apotheoses, sacrifices, games, and divinations. The

Romans had their *Carmen Seculare* and Salian priests, who on certain festivals sung and danced through the streets of Rome. The Israelites were famous for this kind of exultation: "And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances, and Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord," &c.—"And David danced before the Lord with all his might." The psalms composed by this monarch, the songs of Deborah and Isaiah, are further confirmations of what we have advanced.

From the Phœnicians the Greeks borrowed the cursed Orthyan song, when they sacrificed their children to Diana. The poetry of the bards constituted great part of the religious ceremonies among the Gauls and Britons; and the carousals of the Goths were religious institutions, celebrated with songs of triumph. The Mahometan Dervise dances to the sound of the flute, and whirls himself round until he grows giddy, and falls into a trance. The Marabous compose hymns in praise of Alla. The Chinese celebrate their grand festivals with processions of idols, songs, and instrumental music. The Tartars, Samoiedes, Laplanders, Negroes, even the Caffres called Hottentots, solemnise their worship (such as it is) with songs and dancing; so that we may venture to say poetry is the universal vehicle in which all nations have expressed their most sublime conceptions.

Poetry was, in all appearance, previous to any concerted plan of worship, and to every established system of legislation. When certain individuals, by dint of superior prowess or understanding, had acquired the veneration of their fellow-savages, and

erected themselves into divinities on the ignorance and superstition of mankind; then mythology took place, and such a swarm of deities arose, as produced a religion replete with the most shocking absurdities. Those whom their superior talents had deified were found to be still actuated by the most brutal passions of human nature; and, in all probability, their votaries were glad to find such examples, to countenance their own vicious inclinations. Thus the most unrestrained sensuality and licentiousness were sanctified by the amours of Jupiter, Pan, Mars, Venus, and Apollo. Theft was patronised by Mercury, drunkenness by Bacchus, and cruelty by Diana. The same heroes and legislators, those who delivered their country, founded cities, established societies, invented useful arts, or contributed in any eminent degree to the security and happiness of their fellow-creatures, were inspired by the same lusts and appetites which domineered among the inferior classes of mankind; therefore every vice incident to human nature was celebrated in the worship of one or other of these divinities, and every infirmity consecrated by public feast and solemn sacrifice. In these institutions the poet bore a principal share. It was his genius that contrived the plan, that executed the form of worship, and recorded in verse the origin and adventures of their gods and demi-gods. Hence the impurities and horrors of certain writers; the groves of Paphos and Baal-Peor; the orgies of Bacchus; the human sacrifices to Moloch and Diana. Hence the theogony of Hesiod, the theology of Homer, and those innumerable maxims scattered through the ancient poets, inviting mankind to gratify their sensual appetites, in imitation of the gods, who were certainly the best judges of happiness.

It is well known that Plato expelled Homer from his Commonwealth on account of the infamous characters by which he has distinguished his deities, as well as for some depraved sentiments which he found diffused through the course of the Iliad and Odyssey. Cicero enters into the spirit of Plato, and exclaims, in his first book *De Natura Deorum*:—"Nec multa absurdiora sunt ea quæ, poetarum vocibus fusa, ipsa suavitate nocuerunt: qui et ira inflammatos et libidine furentes induxerunt Deos, feceruntque ut eorum bella, pugnas, prælia, vulnera videremus; odia præterea, dissidia, discordias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omni intemperantiâ libidines, adulteria, vincula, cum humano genere concubitus, mortalesque ex immortali procreatos."—"Nor are those things much more absurd which, flowing from the poet's tongue, have done mischief even by the sweetness of his expression. The poets have introduced gods inflamed with anger and enraged with lust; and even produced before our eyes their wars, their wrangling, their duels, and their wounds. They have exposed, besides, their antipathies, animosities, and dissensions; their origin and death; their complaints and lamentations; their appetites indulged to all manner of excess, their adulteries, their fetters, their amorous commerce with the human species, and from immortal parents derived a mortal offspring.

As the festivals of the gods necessarily produced good cheer, which often carried to riot and debauchery, mirth of consequence prevailed; and this was always attended with buffoonery. Taunts and jokes, and raillery and repartee, would necessarily ensue; and individuals would contend for the victory in

wit and genius. These contests would in time be reduced to some regulations, for the entertainment of the people thus assembled, and some prize would be decreed to him who was judged to excel his rivals. The candidates for fame and profit being thus stimulated, would task their talents, and naturally recommend these alternate recriminations to the audience by clothing them with a kind of poetical measure, which should bear a near resemblance to prose. Thus, as the solemn service of the day was composed in the most sublime species of poetry, such as the ode or hymn, the subsequent altercation was carried on in iambics, and gave rise to satire. We are told by the Stagirite, that the highest species of poetry was employed in celebrating great actions, but the humbler sort used in this kind of contention; and that in the ages of antiquity there were some bards that professed heroics, and some that pretended to iambics only.

"Οἱ μὲν ἡρωικῶν, οἱ δὲ ἰάμβων ποιῆται."

To these rude beginnings we not only owe the birth of satire, but likewise the origin of dramatic poetry. Tragedy herself, which afterwards attained to such dignity as to rival the epic muse, was at first no other than a trial of crambo, or iambics, between two peasants, and a goat was the prize, as Horace calls it, *vile certamen ob hircum*, "a mean contest for a he-goat." Hence the name τραγῳδία, signifying the goat-song, from τράγος, *hircus*, and ᾠδή, *carmen*.

"Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,
Mox etiam agrestes satyros nudavit, et asper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit eo, quod
Illecebris erat et gratâ novitate morandus
Spectator, functusque sacris, et potus et exlex."

HORACE.

"The tragic bard, a goat his humble prize,
Bade satyrs naked and uncouth arise;
His muse severe, secure and undismay'd,
The rustic joke in solemn strain convey'd;
For novelty alone he knew could charm
A lawless crowd, with wine and feasting warm."

Satire, then, was originally a clownish dialogue in loose iambics, so called because the actors were disguised like satyrs, who not only recited the praises of Bacchus, or some other deity, but interspersed their hymns with sarcastic jokes and altercation. Of this kind is the *Cyclops* of Euripides, in which Ulysses is the principal actor. The Romans also had their *Atellanæ*, or interludes, of the same nature, so called from the city of *Atella*, where they were first acted; but these were highly polished in comparison of the original entertainment, which was altogether rude and innocent. Indeed the *Cyclops* itself, though composed by the accomplished Euripides, abounds with such impurity as ought not to appear on the stage of any civilised nation.

It is very remarkable that the *Atellanæ*, which were in effect tragi-comedies, grew into such esteem among the Romans, that the performers in these pieces enjoyed several privileges which were refused to the ordinary actors. They were not obliged to unmask, like the other players, when their action was disagreeable to the audience. They were admitted into the army, and enjoyed the privileges of free citizens, without incurring that disgrace which was affixed to the characters of other actors. The poet Laberius, who was of equestrian order, being pressed by Julius Cæsar to act a part in his own performance, complied with great reluctance, and complained of the dishonour he had incurred in his

prologue, preserved by Macrobius, which is one of the most elegant morsels of antiquity.

Tragedy and comedy flowed from the same fountain, though their streams were soon divided. The same entertainment which, under the name of tragedy, was rudely exhibited by clowns, for the prize of a goat, near some rural altar of Bacchus, assumed the appellation of comedy when it was transferred into cities, and represented with a little more decorum in a cart or waggon that strolled from street to street, as the name κωμῳδία implies, being derived from κώμη, a street, and ᾠδή, a poem. To this origin Horace alludes in these lines:

"Dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis,
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora."

"Thespis, inventor of dramatic art,
Convey'd his vagrant actors in a cart:
High o'er the crowd the mimic tribe appear'd,
And played and sung, with lees of wine besmear'd."

Thespis is called the inventor of the dramatic art, because he raised the subject from clownish altercation to the character and exploits of some hero: he improved the language and versification, and relieved the chorus by the dialogue of two actors. This was the first advance towards that consummation of genius and art which constitutes what is now called a perfect tragedy. The next great improver was Æschylus, of whom the same critic says:

"Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis;
Et docuit magnumque loqui nitique cothurno."

Then Æschylus a decent vizard used,
Built a low stage, the flowing robe diffused:
In language more sublime the actors rage,
And in the graceful buskin tread the stage."

The dialogue which Thespis introduced was called the Episode, because it was an addition to the former subject, namely, the praises of Bacchus; so that now tragedy consisted of two distinct parts, independent of each other; the old *recitative*, which was the *chorus*, sung in honour of the gods; and the *episode*, which turned upon the adventures of some hero. This episode being found very agreeable to the people, Æschylus, who lived about half a century after Thespis, still improved the drama, united the chorus to the episode, so as to make them both parts or members of one fable, multiplied the actors, contrived the stage, and introduced the decorations of the theatre; so that Sophocles, who succeeded Æschylus, had but one step to surmount in order to bring the drama to perfection. Thus tragedy was gradually detached from its original institution, which was entirely religious. The priests of Bacchus loudly complained of this innovation by means of the episode, which was foreign to the intention of the chorus; and hence arose the proverb of *Nihil ad Dionysum*, "Nothing to the purpose." Plutarch himself mentions the episode as a perversion of tragedy from the honour of the gods to the passions of men. But notwithstanding all opposition, the new tragedy succeeded to admiration; because it was found the most pleasing vehicle of conveying moral truths, of meliorating the heart, and extending the interests of humanity.

Comedy, according to Aristotle, is the younger sister of Tragedy. As the first originally turned upon the praises of the gods, the latter dwelt on the follies and vices of mankind. Such, we mean, was the scope of that species of poetry which acquired

the name of comedy, in contradiction to the tragic muse; for in the beginning they were the same. The foundation upon which comedy was built we have already explained to be the practice of satirical repartee or altercation, in which individuals exposed the follies and frailties of each other on public occasions of worship and festivity.

The first regular plan of comedy is said to have been the *Margites* of Homer, exposing the idleness and folly of a worthless character; but of this performance we have no remains. That division which is termed the *Ancient Comedy* belongs to the labours of Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes, who were contemporaries, and flourished at Athens about four hundred and thirty years before the Christian era. Such was the licence of the muse at this period, that, far from lashing vice in general characters, she boldly exhibited the exact portrait of every individual who had rendered himself remarkable or notorious by his crimes, folly, or debauchery. She assumed every circumstance of his external appearance, his very attire, air, manner, and even his name; according to the observation of Horace,

". . . . . Poetæ
. . . . quorum comœdia prisca virorum est;
Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant."

"The comic poets, in its earliest age,
Who form'd the manners of the Grecian stage—
Was there a villain who might justly claim
A better right of being damn'd to fame,
Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
They boldly stigmatised the wretch in rhyme."

Eupolis is said to have satirised Alcibiades in this manner, and to have fallen a sacrifice to the resentment of that powerful Athenian: but others say he was drowned in the Hellespont, during a war against the Lacedemonians; and that that in consequence of this accident the Athenians passed a decree, that no poet should ever bear arms.

The comedies of Cratinus are recommended by Quintilian for their eloquence; and Plutarch tells us, that even Pericles himself could not escape the censure of this poet.

Aristophanes, of whom there are eleven comedies still extant, enjoyed such a pre-eminence of reputation, that the Athenians, by a public decree, honoured him with a crown made of a consecrated olive tree, which grew in the citadel, for his care and success in detecting and exposing the vices of those who governed the commonwealth. Yet this poet, whether impelled by mere wantoness of genius, or actuated by malice and envy, could not refrain from employing the shafts of his ridicule against Socrates, the most venerable character of Pagan antiquity. In the comedy of 'The Clouds' this virtuous philosopher was exhibited on the stage, under his own name, in a cloak exactly resembling that which Socrates wore, in a mask modelled from his features, disputing publicly on the nature of right and wrong. This was undoubtedly an instance of the most flagrant licentiousness; and what renders it the more extraordinary, the audience received it with great applause, even while Socrates himself sat publicly in the theatre. The truth is, the Athenians were so fond of ridicule, that they relished it even when employed against the gods

themselves, some of whose characters were very roughly handled by Aristophanes and his rivals in reputation.

We might here draw a parallel between the inhabitants of Athens and the natives of England in point of constitution, genius, and disposition. Athens was a free state like England, that piqued itself upon the influence of the democracy. Like England, its wealth and strength depended upon its maritime power; and it generally acted as umpire in the disputes that arose among its neighbours. The people of Athens, like those of England, were remarkably ingenious, and made great progress in the arts and sciences. They excelled in poetry, history, philosophy, mechanics, and manufactures; they were acute, discerning, disputatious, fickle, wavering, rash, and combustible, and, above all other nations in Europe, addicted to ridicule; a character which the English inherit in a very remarkable degree.

If we may judge from the writings of Aristophanes, his chief aim was to gratify the spleen and excite the mirth of his audience; of an audience, too, that would seem to have been uninformed by taste, and altogether ignorant of decorum; for his pieces are replete with the most extravagant absurdities, virulent slander, impiety, impurities, and low buffoonery. The comic muse, not contented with being allowed to make free with the gods and philosophers, applied her scourge so severely to the magistrates of the commonwealth, that it was thought proper to restrain her within bounds by a law, enacting, that no person should be stigmatised under his real name; and thus the chorus was silenced. In order

to elude the penalty of this law, and gratify the taste of the people, the poets began to substitute fictitious names, under which they exhibited particular characters in such lively colours, that the resemblance could not possibly be mistaken or overlooked. This practice gave rise to what is called the *Middle Comedy*, which was but of short duration; for the legislature, perceiving that the first law had not removed the grievance against which it was provided, issued a second ordinance, forbidding, under severe penalties, any real or family occurrences to be represented. This restriction was the immediate cause of improving comedy into a general mirror, held forth to reflect the various follies and foibles incident to human nature; a species of writing called the *New Comedy*, introduced by Diphilus and Menander, of whose works nothing but a few fragments remain.

IX.

Poetry distinguished from other Writing. Miscellaneous Essays, No. 34.

Having communicated our sentiments touching the origin of poetry, by tracing tragedy and comedy to their common source, we shall now endeavour to point out the criteria by which poetry is distinquished from every other species of writing. In common with other arts, such as statuary and painting, it comprehends imitation, invention, composition, and enthusiasm. Imitation is indeed the basis of all the liberal arts; invention and enthusiasm

constitute genius, in whatever manner it may be displayed. Eloquence of all sorts admits of enthusiasm. Tully says an orator should be "vehemens ut procella, excitatus ut torrens, incensus ut fulmen: tonat, fulgurat, et rapidis eloquentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit et proturbat."—"Violent as a tempest, impetuous as a torrent, and glowing intense like the red bolt of heaven, he thunders, lightens, overthrows, and bears down all before him, by the irresistible tide of eloquence." This is the *mens divinior atque os magna sonaturum* of Horace. This is the talent,

> ". . . Meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
> Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
> Ut magus."
>
> "With passions not my own who fires my heart;
> Who with unreal terrors fills my breast,
> As with a magic influence possess'd."

We are told that Michael Angelo Buonaroti used to work at his statues in a fit of enthusiasm, during which he made the fragments of the stone fly about him with surprising violence. The celebrated Lully being one day blamed for setting nothing to music but the languid verses of Quinault, was animated with the reproach, and running in a fit of enthusiasm to his harpsichord, sung in recitative and accompanied four pathetic lines from the Iphigenia of Racine, with such expression as filled the hearers with astonishment and horror.

Though versification be one of the criteria that distinguish poetry from prose, yet it is not the sole mark of distinction. Were the histories of Polybius and Livy simply turned into verse, they would not become poems; because they would be destitute of those figures, embellishments, and flights of imagi-

nation, which display the poet's art and invention. On the other hand, we have many productions that justly lay claim to the title of poetry, without having the advantage of versification; witness the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, with many beautiful hymns, descriptions, and rhapsodies, to be found in different parts of the Old Testament, some of them the immediate production of divine inspiration; witness the Celtic fragments which have lately appeared in the English language, and are certainly replete with poetical merit. But though good versification alone will not constitute poetry, bad versification alone will certainly degrade and render disgustful the sublimest sentiments and finest flowers of imagination. This humiliating power of bad verse appears in many translations of the ancient poets; in Ogilby's Homer, Trapp's Virgil, and frequently in Creech's Horace. This last indeed is not wholly devoid of spirit; but it seldom rises above mediocrity, and, as Horace says,

> ". . . . . Mediocribus esse poetis
> Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnæ."
>
> "But God and man, and letter'd post denies,
> That Poets ever are of middling size."

How is that beautiful ode beginning with *Justum et tenacem propositi virum* chilled and tamed by the following translation:

> "He who by principle is sway'd,
> In truth and justice still the same,
> Is neither of the crowd afraid,
> Though civil broils the state inflame;
> Nor to a haughty tyrant's frown will stoop,
> Nor to a raging storm, when all the winds are up.

Should nature with convulsions shake,
Struck with the fiery bolts of Jove,
The final doom and dreadful crack
Cannot his constant courage move."

That long Alexandrine—"Nor to a raging storm, when all the winds are up," is drawling, feeble, swoln with a pleonasm or tautology, as well as deficient in the rhyme; and as for the "dreadful crack," in the next stanza, instead of exciting terror, it conveys a low and ludicrous idea. How much more elegant and energetic is this paraphrase of the same ode, inserted in one of the volumes of Hume's *History of England:*

"The man whose mind, on virtue bent,
Pursues some greatly good intent
With undiverted aim,
Serene beholds the angry crowd;
Nor can their clamours fierce and loud
His stubborn honour tame.

Nor the proud tyrant's fiercest threat,
Nor storms that from their dark retreat
The lawless surges wake;
Nor Jove's dread bolt, that shakes the pole,
The firmer purpose of his soul
With all its powers can shake.

Should nature's frame in ruins fall,
And chaos o'er the sinking ball
Resume primeval sway,
His courage chance and fate defies,
Nor feels the wreck of earth and skies
Obstruct its destined way."

If poetry exists independent of versification, it will naturally be asked, how then is it to be distinguished? Undoubtedly by its own peculiar expression: it has a language of its own, which speaks so feelingly to the heart, and so pleasingly to the

imagination, that its meaning cannot possibly be misunderstood by any person of delicate sensations. It is a species of painting with words, in which the figures are happily conceived, ingeniously arranged, affectingly expressed, and recommended with all the warmth and harmony of colouring: it consists of imagery, description, metaphors, similes, and sentiments, adapted with propriety to the subject, so contrived and executed as to soothe the ear, surprise and delight the fancy, mend and melt the heart, elevate the mind, and please the understanding. According to Flaccus:

"Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ;
Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ."

"Poets would profit or delight mankind,
And with th' amusing show th' instructive join'd."

"Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo."

"Profit and pleasure mingled thus with art,
To soothe the fancy and improve the heart."

Tropes and figures are likewise liberally used in rhetoric; and some of the most celebrated orators have owned themselves much indebted to the poets. Theophrastus expressly recommends the poets for this purpose. From their source the spirit and energy of the pathetic, the sublime, and the beautiful are derived. But these figures must be more sparingly used in rhetoric than in poetry, and even then mingled with argumentation, and a detail of facts, altogether different from poetical narration. The poet, instead of simply relating the incident, strikes off a glowing picture of the scene, and ex-

hibits it in the most lively colours to the eye of the imagination. "It is reported that Homer was blind," says Tully in his Tusculan Questions; "yet his poetry is no other than painting. What country, what climate, what ideas, battles, commotions, and contests of men, as well as of wild beasts, has he not painted in such a manner, as to bring before our eyes those very scenes which he himself could not behold?" We cannot, therefore, subscribe to the opinion of some ingenious critics, who have blamed Mr. Pope for deviating in some instances from the simplicity of Homer, in his translation of the Iliad and Odyssey. For example, the Grecian bard says simply "the sun rose;" and his translator gives us a beautiful picture of the sun rising. Homer mentions a person who played upon the lyre; the translator sets him before us warbling to the silver strings. If this be a deviation, it is at the same time an improvement. Homer himself, as Cicero observes above, is full of this kind of painting, and particularly fond of description, even in situations where the action seems to require haste. Neptune, observing from Samothrace the discomfiture of the Grecians before Troy, flies to their assistance, and might have been wafted thither in half a line; but the bard describes him, first, descending the mountain on which he sat; secondly, striding towards his palace at Ægæ, and yoking his horses; thirdly, he describes him putting on his armour; and, lastly, ascending his car, and driving along the surface of the sea. Far from being disgusted by these delays, we are delighted with the particulars of the description. Nothing can be more sublime than the circumstance of the mountain's trembling beneath the footsteps of an immortal:

". . . Τρέμε δ' οὐρέα μακρὰ καὶ ὕλη
Ποσσὶν ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι Ποσειδάωνος ἰόντος."

But his passage to the Grecian fleet is altogether transporting:

"Βῆ δ' ἐλαᾶν ἐπὶ κύματ'," κ.τ.λ.

"He mounts the car, the golden scourge applies,
He sits superior, and the chariot flies;
His whirling wheels the glassy surface sweep;
Th' enormous monsters, rolling o'er the deep,
Gambol around him on the watery way,
And heavy whales in awkward measures play:
The sea subsiding spreads a level plain,
Exults and crowns the monarch of the main;
The parting waves before his coursers fly;
The wond'ring waters leave his axle dry."

With great veneration for the memory of Mr. Pope, we cannot help objecting to some lines of this translation. We have no idea of the sea's exulting and crowning Neptune, after it had subsided into a level plain. There is no such image in the original. Homer says the whales exulted, and knew, or owned their king; and that the sea parted with joy: γηθοσύνῃ δὲ θαλάσσα διΐστατο. Neither is there a word of the wondering waters: we therefore think the lines might be thus altered to advantage:

"They knew and own'd the monarch of the main:
The sea subsiding spreads a level plain;
The curling waves before his coursers fly;
The parting surface leaves his brazen axle dry."

Besides the metaphors, similes, and allusions of poetry, there is an infinite variety of tropes, or turns of expression, occasionally disseminated through works of genius, which serve to animate the whole,

and distinguish the glowing effusions of real inspiration from the cold efforts of mere science. These tropes consist of a certain happy choice and arrangement of words, by which ideas are artfully disclosed in a great variety of attitudes; of epithets, and compound epithets; of sounds collected in order to echo the sense conveyed; of apostrophes; and above all, the enchanting use of the prosopopœia, which is a kind of magic, by which the poet gives life and motion to every inanimate part of nature. Homer, describing the wrath of Agamemnon, in the first book of the Iliad, strikes off a glowing image in two words:

". . . ὅσσε δ' οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι ἐίκτην."

"—and from his eyeballs *flash'd the living fire.*"

This indeed is a figure which has been copied by Virgil, and almost all the poets of every age—*oculis* micat *acribus ignis*—ignescunt iræ: *auris dolor ossibus* ardet. Milton, describing Satan in hell, says,

"With head uplift above the wave, and eye
That *sparkling blazed*—

—He spake: and to confirm his words out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim. The sudden *blaze*
Far round *illumined* hell—"

There are certain words in every language particularly adapted to the poetical expression; some from the image or idea they convey to the imagination, and some from the effect they have upon the ear. The first are truly *figurative;* the others may be called *emphatical.* Rollin observes that Virgil has, upon many occasions, poetised (if we may be

allowed the expression) a whole sentence by means of the same word, which is *pendere*.

"Ite meæ, felix quondam pecus, ite capellæ;
Non ego vos posthac, viridi projectus in antro,
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo."

"At ease reclined beneath the verdant shade,
No more shall I behold my happy flock
Aloft *hang* browsing on the tufted rock."

Here the word *pendere* wonderfully improves the landscape, and renders the whole passage beautifully picturesque. The same figurative verb we meet with in many different parts of the Æneid.

"Hi summo fluctu *pendent*, his unda *dehiscens*
Terram inter fluctus aperit."

"These on the mountain billow *hung*; to those
The *yawning waves* the yellow sand disclose."

In this instance the words *pendent* and *dehiscens*, *hung* and *yawning*, are equally poetical. Addison seems to have had this passage in his eye when he wrote his Hymn, which is inserted in the Spectator:

"—For though in dreadful worlds we *hung*,
High on the broken wave."

And in another piece of a like nature in the same collection:

"Thy providence my life sustain'd,
And all my wants redress'd,
When in the silent womb I lay,
And *hung* upon the breast."

Shakespeare, in his admired description of Dover cliff, uses the same expression:

"——half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire—dreadful trade."

Nothing can be more beautiful than the following

picture, in which Milton has introduced the same expressive tint:

> "——he, on his side
> Leaning, half raised, with looks of cordial love
> *Hung* over her enamour'd."

We shall give one example more from Virgil, to show in what a variety of scenes it may appear with propriety and effect. In describing the progress of Dido's passion for Æneas the poet says:

> "Iliacos iterum demens audire labores
> Exposcit, *pendetque* iterum narrantis ab ore."

> "The woes of Troy once more she begg'd to hear;
> Once more the mournful tale employ'd his tongue,
> While in fond rapture on his lips she *hung*."

The reader will perceive, in all these instances, that no other word could be substituted with equal energy; indeed, no other word could be used, without degrading the sense and defacing the image.

There are many other verbs of poetical import, fetched from nature and from art, which the Poet uses to advantage, both in a literal and metaphorical sense; and these have been always translated for the same purpose from one language to another; such as *quasso, concutio, cieo, suscito, lenio, sævio, mano, fluo, ardeo, mico, aro,* to shake, to wake, to rouse, to soothe, to rage, to flow, to shine or blaze, to plough. —Quassantia *tectum limina—Æneas casu* concussus *acerbo—Ære* ciere *viros, Martemque accendere cantu—Æneas acuit Martem et se* suscitat *ira—Impium* lenite *clamorem*—Lenibant *curas—Ne* sævi *magna sacerdos—Sudor ad imos* manabat *solos—Suspensœque diu lacrymæ* fluxere *per ora—Juvenili* ardebat *amore* Micat *aureus ensis—Nullum maris æquor* arandum. It will

be unnecessary to insert examples of the same nature from the English poets.

The words we term *emphatical* are such as by their sound express the sense they are intended to convey; and with these the Greek abounds, above all other languages, not only from its natural copiousness, flexibility, and significance, but also from the variety of its dialects, which enables a writer to vary his terminations occasionally as the nature of the subject requires, without offending the most delicate ear, or incurring the imputation of adopting vulgar provincial expressions. Every smatterer in Greek can repeat

"βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοισβοῖο θαλάσσης,"

in which the two last words wonderfully echo to the sense, conveying the idea of the sea dashing on the shore. How much more significant in sound than that beautiful image of Shakespeare—

"The sea that on the unnumber'd pebbles beats!"

And yet, if we consider the strictness of propriety, this last expression would seem to have been selected on purpose to concur with the other circumstances, which are brought together to ascertain the vast height of Dover cliff; for the poet adds, "cannot be heard so high." The place where Glo'ster stood was so high above the surface of the sea that the φλοῖσβος, or *dashing*, could not be heard, and therefore an enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare might, with some plausibility, affirm the poet had chosen an expression in which that sound is not at all conveyed.

In the very same page of Homer's Iliad we meet

with two other striking instances of the same sort of beauty. Apollo, incensed at the insults his priest had sustained, descends from the top of Olympus with his bow and quiver rattling on his shoulder as he moved along:

"Ἔκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' ὀϊστοὶ ἐπ' ὤμων."

Here the sound of the word ἔκλαγξαν admirably expresses the clanking of armour; as the third line after this surprisingly imitates the twanging of a bow.

"Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο."

"In shrill-toned murmurs sang the twanging bow."

Many beauties of the same kind are scattered through Homer, Pindar, and Theocritus, such as the βομβεῦσα μέλισσα, *susurrans apicula;* the ἁδὺ ψιθύρισμα, *dulcem susurrum;* and the μελίσδεται, for the sighing of the pine.

The Latin language teems with sounds adapted to every situation, and the English is not destitute of this significant energy. We have the *cooing* turtle, the *sighing* reed, the *warbling* rivulet, the *gliding* stream, the *whispering* breeze, the glance, the gleam, the flash, the *bickering* flame, the *dashing* wave, the *gushing* spring, the *howling* blast, the *rattling* storm, the *pattering* shower, the *crimp* earth, the *mouldering* tower, the *twanging* bowstring, the *clanging* arms, the *clanking* chains, the *twinkling* stars, the *tinkling* chords, the *trickling* drops, the *twittering* swallow, the *cawing* rook, the *screeching* owl; and a thousand other words and epithets, wonderfully suited to the sense they imply.

Among the select passages of poetry which we shall insert by way of illustration, the reader will

find instances of all the different tropes and figures which the best authors have adopted in the variety of their poetical works, as well as of the apostrophe, abrupt transition, repetition, and prosopopœia.

In the meantime it will be necessary still farther to analyse those principles which constitute the essence of poetical merit; to display those delightful parterres that teem with the fairest flowers of imagination; and distinguish between the gaudy offspring of a cold inspired fancy and the glowing progeny, diffusing sweets, produced and invigorated by the sun of genius.

X.

The Tenants of the Leasowes: History of a Poet's Garden. Miscellaneous Essays, No. 34.

Of all men who form gay allusions of distant happiness, perhaps a poet is the most sanguine. Such is the ardour of his hopes, that they often are equal to actual enjoyment; and he feels more in expectance than actual fruition. I have often regarded a character of this kind with some degree of envy. A man possessed of such warm imagination commands all nature, and arrogates possessions of which the owner has a blunter relish. While life continues, the alluring prospect lies before him; he travels in the pursuit with confidence, and resigns it only with his last breath.

It is this happy confidence which gives life its true relish, and keeps up our spirits amidst every distress and disappointment. How much less would

be done, if a man knew how little he can do! how wretched a creature would he be, if he saw the end as well as the beginning of his projects! He would have nothing left but to sit down in torpid despair, and exchange employment for actual calamity.

I was led into this train of thinking upon lately visiting* the beautiful gardens of the late Mr. Shenstone, who was himself a poet, and possessed of that warm imagination, which made him ever foremost in the pursuit of flying happiness. Could he but have foreseen the end of all his schemes, for whom he was improving, and what changes his designs were to undergo, he would have scarcely amused his innocent life with what, for several years, employed him in a most harmless manner, and abridged his scanty fortune. As the progress of this improvement is a true picture of sublunary vicissitude, I could not help calling up my imagination which, while I walked pensively alone, suggested the following reverie.

As I was turning my back upon a beautiful piece of water enlivened with cascades and rock-work, and entering a dark walk, by which ran a prattling brook, the genius of the place appeared before me, but more resembling the God of Time, than him more peculiarly appointed to the care of gardens. Instead of shears he bore a scythe; and he appeared rather with the implements of husbandry, than those of a modern gardener. Having remembered this place in its pristine beauty, I could not help condoling with him on its present ruinous situation. I spoke to him of the many alterations which had been made, and all for the worse; of the

* 1772.

many shades which had been taken away, of the bowers that were destroyed by neglect, and the hedge-rows that were spoiled by clipping. The genius with a sigh received my condolement, and assured me that he was equally a martyr to ignorance and taste, to refinement and rusticity. Seeing me desirous of knowing farther, he went on:

"You see, in the place before you, the paternal inheritance of a poet; and to a man content with little, fully sufficient for his subsistence: but a strong imagination and a long acquaintance with the rich are dangerous foes to contentment. Our poet, instead of sitting down to enjoy life, resolved to prepare for its future enjoyment; and set about converting a place of profit into a scene of pleasure. This he at first supposed could be accomplished at a small expense; and he was willing for a while to stint his income, to have an opportunity of displaying his taste. The improvement in this manner went forward; one beauty attained led him to wish for some other; but he still hoped that every emendation would be the last. It was now therefore found, that the improvement exceeded the subsidy, that the place was grown too large and too fine for the inhabitant. But that pride which was once exhibited could not retire; the garden was made for the owner, and though it was become unfit for him, he could not willingly resign it to another. Thus the first idea of its beauties contributing to the happiness of his life was found unfaithful; so that, instead of looking within for satisfaction, he began to think of having recourse to the praises of those who came to visit his improvement.

"In consequence of this hope, which now took

possession of his mind, the gardens were opened to the visits of every stranger; and the country flocked round to the walk, to criticise, to admire, and to do mischief. He soon found, that the admirers of his taste left by no means such strong marks of their applause, as the envious did of their malignity. All the windows of his temples, and the walls of his retreats, were impressed with the characters of profaneness, ignorance, and obscenity; his hedges were broken, his statues and urns defaced, and his lawns worn bare. It was now therefore necessary to shut up the gardens once more, and to deprive the public of that happiness which had before ceased to be his own.

"In this situation the poet continued for a time in the character of a jealous lover, fond of the beauty he keeps, but unable to supply the extravagance of every demand. The garden by this time was completely grown and finished; the marks of art were covered up by the luxuriance of nature; the winding walks were grown dark; the brook assumed a natural sylvage; and the rocks were covered with moss. Nothing now remained but to enjoy the beauties of the place, when the poor poet died, and his garden was obliged to be sold for the benefit of those who had contributed to its embellishment.

"The beauties of the place had now for some time been celebrated as well in prose as in verse: and all men of taste wished for so envied a spot, where every turn was marked with the poet's pencil, and every walk awakened genius and meditation. The first purchaser was one Mr. Truepenny, a button-maker, who was possessed of three thousand pounds, and was willing also to be possessed of taste and genius.

"As the poet's ideas were for the natural wildness of the landscape, the button-maker's were for the more regular productions of art. He conceived perhaps, that as it is a beauty in a button to be of a regular pattern, so the same regularity ought to obtain in a landscape. Be this as it will, he employed the shears to some purpose; he clipped up the hedges, cut down the gloomy walks, made vistas upon the stables and hog-sties, and showed his friends that a man of taste should always be doing.

"The next candidate for taste and genius was a captain of a ship, who bought the garden because the former possessor could find nothing more to mend; but unfortunately he had a taste too. His great passion lay in building, in making Chinese temples, and cage-work summer-houses. As the place before had an appearance of retirement, and inspired meditation, he gave it a more peopled air; every turning presented a cottage, or ice-house, or a temple; the improvement was converted into a little city, and it only wanted inhabitants to give it the air of a village in the East Indies.

"In this manner, in less than ten years, the improvement has gone through the hands of as many proprietors, who were all willing to have taste, and to show their taste too. As the place had received its best finishing from the hand of the first possessor, so every innovator only lent a hand to do mischief. Those parts which were obscure, have been enlightened; those walks which led naturally, have been twisted into serpentine windings. The colour of the flowers of the field is not more various than the variety of tastes that have been employed here, and all in direct contradiction to the original

aim of the first improver. Could the original possessor but revive, with what sorrowful heart would he look upon his favourite spot again! He would scarcely recollect a Dryad or a Wood-nymph of his former acquaintance, and might perhaps find himself as much a stranger in his own plantation as in the deserts of Siberia."

XI.

The Sagacity of the Spider. From 'The Bee,' No. 4.

Sir,—Animals, in general, are sagacious in proportion as they cultivate society. The elephant and the beaver show the greatest signs of this when united; but when man intrudes into their communities, they lose all their spirit of industry, and testify but a very small share of that sagacity for which, when in a social state, they are so remarkable.

Among insects, the labours of the bee and the ant have employed the attention and admiration of the naturalist; but their whole sagacity is lost upon separation, and a single bee or ant seems destitute of every degree of industry, is the most stupid insect imaginable, languishes for a time in solitude, and soon dies.

Of all the solitary insects I have ever remarked, the spider is the most sagacious; and its actions, to me who have attentively considered them, seem almost to exceed belief. This insect is formed by nature for a state of war, not only upon other

insects, but upon each other. For this state nature seems perfectly well to have formed it. Its head and breast are covered with a strong natural coat of mail, which is impenetrable to the attempts of every other insect, and its belly is enveloped in a soft pliant skin, which eludes the sting even of a wasp. Its legs are terminated by strong claws, not unlike those of a lobster; and their vast length, like spears, serves to keep every assailant at a distance.

Not worse furnished for observation than for an attack or a defence, it has several eyes, large, transparent, and covered with a horny substance, which, however, does not impede its vision. Besides this, it is furnished with the forceps above the mouth, which serves to kill or secure the prey already caught in its claws or its net.

Such are the implements of war with which the body is immediately furnished; but its net to entangle the enemy seems what it chiefly trusts to, and what it takes most pains to render as complete as possible. Nature, by a curious provision, has furnished the body of this little creature with a glutinous liquid which it spins into thread, coarser or finer, according to the object it has in view. In order to fix its thread, when it begins to weave it emits a small drop of its liquid against the wall, which, hardening by degrees, serves to hold the thread very firmly; then receding from the first point, as it recedes the thread lengthens; and, when the spider has come to the place where the other end of the thread should be fixed, gathering up with its claws the thread, which would otherwise be too slack, it is stretched

tightly, and fixed in the same manner to the wall as before.

In this manner it spins and fixes several threads parallel to each other, which, so to speak, serve as the warp to the intended web. To form the woof, it spins in the same manner its thread, transversely fixing one end to the first thread that was spun, and which is always the strongest of the whole web, and the other to the wall. All these threads, being newly spun, are glutinous, and therefore stick to each other wherever they happen to touch; and in those parts of the web most exposed to be torn, our natural artist strengthens them, by doubling the threads sometimes sixfold.

Thus far naturalists have gone in the description of this animal; what follows is the result of my own observation upon that species of the insect called a house spider. I perceived, about four years ago, a large spider in one corner of my room, making its web; and, though the maid frequently levelled her fatal broom against the labours of the little animal, I had the good fortune then to prevent its destruction; and, I may say, it more than paid me by the entertainment it afforded.

In three days the web was, with incredible diligence, completed; nor could I avoid thinking, that the insect seemed to exult in its new abode. It frequently traversed it round, examined the strength of every part of it, retired into its hole, and came out very frequently. The first enemy, however, it had to encounter, was another and a much larger spider, which, having no web of its own, and having probably exhausted all its stock in former labours of this kind, came to invade the property of its

neighbour. Soon, then, a terrible encounter ensued, in which the invader seemed to have the victory, and the laborious spider was obliged to take refuge in its hole. Upon this I perceived the victor using every art to draw the enemy from his stronghold. He seemed to go off, but quickly returned; and when he found all arts in vain, began to destroy the new web without mercy. This brought on another battle, and, contrary to my expectations, the laborious spider became conqueror, and fairly killed his antagonist.

Now, then, in peaceable possession of what was justly its own, it waited three days with the utmost impatience, repairing the breaches of its web, and taking no sustenance that I could perceive. At last, however, a large blue fly fell into the snare, and struggled hard to get loose. The spider gave it leave to entangle itself as much as possible, but it seemed to be too strong for the cobweb. I must own I was greatly surprised when I saw the spider immediately sally out, and in less than a minute weave a new net round its captive, by which the motion of its wings was stopped; and when it was fairly hampered in this manner, it was seized and dragged into the hole.

In this manner it lived, in a precarious state; and nature seemed to have fitted it for such a life, for upon a single fly it subsisted for more than a week. I once put a wasp into the net; but when the spider came out in order to seize it as usual, upon perceiving what kind of an enemy it had to deal with, it instantly broke all the bands that held it fast, and contributed all that lay in its power to disengage so formidable an antagonist. When the wasp

was at liberty, I expected the spider would have set about repairing the breaches that were made in its net; but those, it seems, were irreparable; wherefore the cobweb was now entirely forsaken, and a new one begun, which was completed in the usual time.

I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a spider could furnish; wherefore I destroyed this, and the insect set about another. When I destroyed the other also, its whole stock seemed entirely exhausted, and it could spin no more. The arts it made use of to support itself, now deprived of its great means of subsistence, were indeed surprising. I have seen it roll up its legs like a ball, and lie motionless for hours together, but cautiously watching all the time: when a fly happened to approach sufficiently near, it would dart out all at once, and often seize its prey.

Of this life, however, it soon began to grow weary, and resolved to invade the possession of some other spider, since it could not make a web of its own. It formed an attack upon a neighbouring fortification with great vigour, and at first was as vigorously repulsed. Not daunted, however, with one defeat, in this manner it continued to lay siege to another's web for three days, and at length, having killed the defendant, actually took possession. When smaller flies happen to fall into the snare, the spider does not sally out at once, but very patiently waits till it is sure of them; for, upon his immediately approaching, the terror of his appearance might give the captive strength sufficient to get loose: the manner then is to wait patiently till, by ineffectual and impotent struggles, the captive has wasted all

his strength, and then he becomes a certain and easy conquest.

The insect I am now describing lived three years; every year it changed its skin, and got a new set of legs. I have sometimes plucked off a leg, which grew again in two or three days. At first it dreaded my approach to the web, but at last it became so familiar as to take a fly out of my hand; and upon my touching any part of the web, would immediately leave its hole, prepared either for a defence or an attack.

To complete this description, it may be observed, that the male spiders are much less than the female, and that the latter are oviparous. When they come to lay, they spread a part of their web under the eggs, and then roll them up carefully, as we roll up things in a cloth, and thus hatch them in their hole. If disturbed in their holes, they never attempt to escape without carrying this young brood in their forceps away with them, and thus frequently are sacrificed to their parental affection.

As soon as ever the young ones leave their artificial covering, they begin to spin, and almost sensibly seem to grow bigger. If they have the good fortune, when even but a day old, to catch a fly, they fall to with good appetites; but they live sometimes three or four days without any sort of sustenance, and yet still continue to grow larger, so as every day to double their former size. As they grow old, however, they do not still continue to increase, but their legs only continue to grow longer; and when a spider becomes entirely stiff with age, and unable to seize its prey, it dies at length of hunger.

XII.

CHINESE LETTERS; OR, THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE schoolmen had formerly a very exact way of computing the abilities of their saints or authors. Escobar, for instance, was said to have learning as five, genius as four, and gravity as seven. Caramuel was greater than he. His learning was as eight, his genius as six, and his gravity as thirteen. Were I to estimate the merits of our Chinese Philosopher by the same scale, I would not hesitate to state his genius still higher; but as to his learning and gravity, these, I think, might safely be marked as nine hundred and ninety-nine, within one degree of absolute frigidity.

Yet, upon his first appearance here, many were angry not to find him as ignorant as a Tripoline ambassador or an envoy from Mujac. They were surprised to find a man born so far from London, that school of prudence and wisdom, endued even with a moderate capacity. They expressed the same surprise at his knowledge that the Chinese do of ours. "How comes it," said they, "that the Europeans, so remote from China, think with so much justice and precision? They have never read our books, they scarcely know even our letters, and yet they talk and reason just as we do." The truth is, the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind. Savages of the most opposite climates have all but one character

of improvidence and rapacity; and tutored nations, however separate, make use of the very same methods to procure refined enjoyment.

The distinctions of polite nations are few; but such as are peculiar to the Chinese appear in every page of the following correspondence. The metaphors and allusions are all drawn from the East. Their formality our author carefully preserves. Many of their favourite tenets in morals are illustrated. The Chinese are always concise; so is he. Simple; so is he. The Chinese are grave and sententious; so is he. But in one particular the resemblance is peculiarly striking: the Chinese are often dull; and so is he. Nor has my assistance been wanting. We are told in an old romance of a certain knight-errant and his horse who contracted an intimate friendship. The horse most usually bore the knight; but, in cases of extraordinary dispatch, the knight returned the favour, and carried his horse. Thus, in the intimacy between my author and me, he has usually given me a lift of his eastern sublimity, and I have sometimes given him a return of my colloquial ease.

Yet it appears strange, in this season of panegyric, when scarcely an author passes unpraised either by his friends or himself, that such merit as our Philosopher's should be forgotten. While the epithets of ingenious, copious, elaborate, and refined are lavished among the mob, like medals at a coronation, the lucky prizes fall on every side, but not one on him. I could on this occasion make myself melancholy, by considering the capriciousness of public taste, or the mutability of fortune; but during this fit of morality, lest my reader should sleep, I'll take

a nap myself, and when I awake tell him my dream.

I imagined the Thames was frozen over, and I stood by its side. Several booths were erected upon the ice, and I was told by one of the spectators, that Fashion Fair was going to begin. He added, that every author who could carry his works there might probably find a very good reception. I was resolved, however, to observe the humours of the place in safety from the shore; sensible that ice was at best precarious, and having been always a little cowardly in my sleep.

Several of my acquaintance seemed much more hardy than I, and went over the ice with intrepidity. Some carried their works to the fair on sledges, some on carts, and those which were more voluminous were conveyed in waggons. Their temerity astonished me. I knew their cargoes were heavy, and expected every moment they would have gone to the bottom. They all entered the fair, however, in safety, and each soon after returned, to my great surprise, highly satisfied with his entertainment and the bargains he had brought away.

The success of such numbers at last began to operate upon me. If these, cried I, meet with favour and safety, some luck may, perhaps, for once attend the unfortunate. I am resolved to make a new adventure. The furniture, frippery, and fireworks of China have long been fashionably bought up. I'll try the fair with a small cargo of Chinese morality. If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste, I'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding. But, as others have driven into the market in waggons, I'll cautiously begin by

venturing with a wheelbarrow. Thus resolved, I baled up my goods, and fairly ventured; when, upon just entering the fair, I fancied the ice, that had supported an hundred waggons before, cracked under me, and wheelbarrow and all went to the bottom.

Upon awaking from my reverie with the fright, I cannot help wishing that the pains taken in giving this correspondence an English dress had been employed in contriving new political systems, or new plots for farces. I might then have taken my station in the world, either as a poet or a philosopher, and made one in those little societies where men club to raise each other's reputation. But at present I belong to no particular class. I resemble one of those animals that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain. Though none are injured by my rage, I am naturally too savage to court any friends by fawning, too obstinate to be taught new tricks, and too improvident to mind what may happen. I am appeased, though not contented. Too indolent for intrigue, and too timid to push for favour, I am—But what signifies what am I?

"Ἐλπὶς καὶ σὺ τύχη μέγα χαίρετε· τὸν λιμέν' εὗρον.
Οὐδὲν ἐμοὶ χ' ὑμῖν· παίζετε τοὺς μετ' ἐμέ."

XIII.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER VISITS WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religous awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all: they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands." I accepted, with thanks, the

gentleman's offer, adding, that "I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can in no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The Man in Black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection."—"It is not requisite," replied my companion, smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here: more humble abilities will suffice."—"What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the

taking half a score of towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?"—"Gaining battles, or taking towns," replied the Man in Black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege."—"This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume—of one whose wit has gained him immortality?"—"No, sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself."—"Pray tell me, then, in a word," said I, peevishly, "what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?"—"Remarkable, sir!" said my companion; "why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster Abbey."—"But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?"—"I suppose," replied the Man in Black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He really believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As we walked along to a particular part of the

temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poet's Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton."—"Drayton!" I replied; "I never heard of him before; but I have been told of one Pope—is he there?"—"It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years; he is not long dead; people have not done hating him yet."—"Strange," cried I; "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?"—"Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce and Scribbler; to praise the dead and revile the living; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candour; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety."

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I.—"Yes, with every mother's son

of them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarine. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronise men of merit, and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness."

"I own there are many," replied the Man in Black; "but alas! sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish: thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table."

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly, I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand; and asked the man, whether the people of England kept a show?—whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach?—whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honour?"—"As for your questions," replied the gate-keeper, "to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one—who rents it from another—who hires it from a third—who leases it from the guardians of the temple: and we all must live." I expected, upon paying here, to

see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us who without once blushing told an hundred lies: he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger; of a king with a golden head, and twenty such pieces of absurdity. "Look ye there, gentlemen," says he, pointing to an old oak chair, "there's a curiosity for ye; in that chair the kings of England were crowned: you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow." I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone: could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case, there was no more reason for my surprise, than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. "This armour," said he, "belonged to General Monk."—"Very surprising that a general should wear armour!"—"And pray,"

added he, "observe this cap; this is General Monk's cap."—"Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?"—"That, sir," says he, "I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble."—"A very small recompense, truly," said I.—"Not so very small," replied he, "for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money."—"What, more money! still more money!"—"Every gentleman gives something, sir."—"I'll give thee nothing," returned I; "the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars."

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.

XIV.

Reception of the Chinese Philosopher by a Lady of Distinction.

I was some days ago agreeably surprised by a message from a lady of distinction, who sent me word, that she most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance, and with the utmost impatience expected an interview. I will not deny, my dear

Fum Hoam, but that my vanity was raised at such an invitation: I flattered myself that she had seen me in some public place, and had conceived an affection for my person, which thus induced her to deviate from the usual decorums of the sex. My imagination painted her in all the bloom of youth and beauty. I fancied her attended by the Loves and Graces; and I set out with the most pleasing expectations of seeing the conquest I had made.

When I was introduced into her apartment, my expectations were quickly at an end: I perceived a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a sofa, who nodded, by way of approbation, at my approach. This, as I was afterwards informed, was the lady herself,—a woman equally distinguished for rank, politeness, taste, and understanding. As I was dressed after the fashion of Europe, she had taken me for an Englishman, and consequently saluted me in her ordinary manner: but when the footman informed her grace that I was the gentleman from China, she instantly lifted herself from the couch, while her eyes sparkled with unusual vivacity. "Bless me! can this be the gentleman that was born so far from home? What an unusual share of *somethingness* in his whole appearance! Lord, how I am charmed with the outlandish cut of his face! how bewitching the exotic breadth of his forehead! I would give the world to see him in his own country dress. Pray, turn about, sir, and let me see you behind. There, there's a travelled air for you! You that attend there, bring up a plate of beef cut into small pieces; I have a violent passion to see him eat. Pray, sir, have you got your chop-

sticks about you? It will be so pretty to see the meat carried to the mouth with a jerk. Pray, speak a little Chinese: I have learned some of the language myself. Lord! have you nothing pretty from China about you; something that one does not know what to do with? I have got twenty things from China that are of no use in the world. Look at those jars; they are of the right pea-green: these are the furniture!"—"Dear madam," said I, "these, though they may appear fine in your eyes, are but paltry to a Chinese; but as they are useful utensils, it is proper they should have a place in every apartment."—"Useful, sir!" replied the lady; "sure you mistake; they are of no use in the world."—"What! are they not filled with an infusion of tea, as in China?" replied I. "Quite empty and useless, upon my honour, sir."—"Then they are the most cumbrous and clumsy furniture in the world, as nothing is truly elegant but what unites use with beauty."—"I protest," says the lady, "I shall begin to suspect thee of being an actual barbarian. I suppose you hold my two beautiful pagods in contempt."—"What!" cried I, "has Fohi spread his gross superstitions here also! Pagods of all kinds are my aversion."—"A Chinese, a traveller, and want taste! It surprises me. Pray, sir, examine the beauties of that Chinese temple which you see at the end of the garden. Is there anything in China more beautiful?"—"Where I stand, I see nothing, madam, at the end of the garden, that may not as well be called an Egyptian pyramid as a Chinese temple; for that little building in view is as like the one as t'other."—"What, sir! is not that a Chinese temple? you must surely be mistaken.

Mr. Freeze, who designed it, calls it one, and nobody disputes his pretensions to taste." I now found it vain to contradict the lady in anything she thought fit to advance; so was resolved rather to act the disciple than the instructor. She took me through several rooms, all furnished, as she told me, in the Chinese manner; sprawling dragons, squatting pagods, and clumsy mandarines were stuck upon every shelf: in turning round, one must have used caution not to demolish a part of the precarious furniture.

In a house like this, thought I, one must live continually upon the watch; the inhabitant must resemble a knight in an enchanted castle, who expects to meet an adventure at every turning. "But, madam," said I, "do not accidents ever happen to all this finery?"—"Man, sir," replied the lady, "is born to misfortunes; and it is but fit I should have a share. Three weeks ago, a careless servant snapped off the head of a favourite mandarine: I had scarce done grieving for that, when a monkey broke a beautiful jar; this I took the more to heart, as the injury was done me by a friend! However, I survived the calamity; when yesterday crash went half-a-dozen dragons upon the marble hearthstone: and yet I live; I survive it all: you can't conceive what comfort I find under afflictions from philosophy. There is Seneca, and Bolingbroke, and some others, who guide me through life, and teach me to support its calamities." I could not but smile at a woman who makes her own misfortunes, and then deplores the miseries of her situation. Wherefore, tired of acting with dissimulation, and willing to indulge my meditations

in solitude, I took leave just as the servant was bringing in a plate of beef, pursuant to the directions of his mistress.—Adieu.

XV.

English Treatment of French Prisoners.

Yet, while I sometimes lament the case of humanity, and the depravity of human nature, there now and then appear gleams of greatness that serve to relieve the eye oppressed with the hideous prospect, and resemble those cultivated spots that are sometimes found in the midst of an Asiatic wilderness. I see many superior excellencies among the English, which it is not in the power of all their follies to hide: I see virtues, which in other countries are known only to a few, practised here by every rank of people.

I know not whether it proceeds from their superior opulence that the English are more charitable than the rest of mankind; whether by being possessed of all the conveniences of life themselves, they have more leisure to perceive the uneasy situation of the distressed; whatever be the motive, they are not only the most charitable of any other nation, but most judicious in distinguishing the properest objects of compassion.

In other countries, the giver is generally influenced by the immediate impulse of pity; his generosity is exerted as much to relieve his own uneasy sensations as to comfort the object in distress. In England, benefactions are of a more general nature. Some men of fortune and universal

benevolence propose the proper objects; the wants and the merits of the petitioners are canvassed by the people; neither passion nor pity find a place in the cool discussion; and charity is then only exerted when it has received the approbation of reason.

A late instance of this finely-directed benevolence forces itself so strongly on my imagination, that it in a manner reconciles me to pleasure, and once more makes me the universal friend of man.

The English and French have not only political reasons to induce them to mutual hatred, but often the more prevailing motive of a private interest to widen the breach. A war between other countries is carried on collectively; army fights against army, and a man's own private resentment is lost in that of the community: but in England and France, the individuals of each country plunder each other at sea without redress, and consequently feel that animosity against each other which passengers do at a robber. They have for some time carried on an expensive war; and several captives have been taken on both sides: those made prisoners by the French have been used with cruelty, and guarded with unnecessary caution: those taken by the English, being much more numerous, were confined in the ordinary manner; and not being released by their countrymen, began to feel all those inconveniences which arise from want of covering and long confinement.

Their countrymen were informed of their deplorable situation; but they, more intent on annoying their enemies than relieving their friends, refused the least assistance. The English now

saw thousands of their fellow-creatures starving in every prison, forsaken by those whose duty it was to protect them, labouring with disease, and without clothes to keep off the severity of the season. National benevolence prevailed over national animosity; their prisoners were indeed enemies, but they were enemies in distress; they ceased to be hateful when they no longer continued to be formidable: forgetting, therefore, their national hatred, the men who were brave enough to conquer, were generous enough to forgive; and they whom all the world seemed to have disclaimed, at last found pity and redress from those they attempted to subdue. A subscription was opened, ample charities collected, proper necessaries procured, and the poor gay sons of a merry nation were once more taught to resume their former gaiety.

When I cast my eye over the list of those who contributed on this occasion, I find the names almost entirely English; scarce one foreigner appears among the number. It was for Englishmen alone to be capable of such exalted virtue. I own I cannot look over this catalogue of good men and philosophers, without thinking better of myself, because it makes me entertain a more favourable opinion of mankind. I am particularly struck with one who writes these words upon the paper that enclosed his benefaction: "The mite of an Englishman, a citizen of the world, to Frenchmen, prisoners of war, and naked." I only wish that he may find as much pleasure from his virtues as I have done in reflecting upon them; that alone will amply reward him. Such a one, my friend, is an honour to human nature; he makes no private distinctions

of party; all that are stamped with the divine image of their Creator are friends to him: he is a native of the world; and the Emperor of China may be proud that he has such a countryman.

To rejoice at the destruction of our enemies is a foible grafted upon human nature, and we must be permitted to indulge it: the true way of atoning for such an ill-founded pleasure, is thus to turn our triumph into an act of benevolence, and to testify our own joy by endeavouring to banish anxiety from others.

Hamti, the best and wisest emperor that ever filled the throne, after having gained three signal victories over the Tartars, who had invaded his dominions, returned to Nankin, in order to enjoy the glory of his conquest. After he had rested for some days, the people, who are naturally fond of processions, impatiently expected the triumphant entry which emperors upon such occasions were accustomed to make: their murmurs came to the emperor's ear; he loved his people, and was willing to do all in his power to satisfy their just desires. He therefore assured them, that he intended, upon the next feast of the Lanterns, to exhibit one of the most glorious triumphs that had ever been seen in China.

The people were in raptures at his condescension; and, on the appointed day, assembled at the gates of the palace with the most eager expectations. Here they waited for some time, without seeing any of those preparations which usually precede a pageant. The lantern with ten thousand tapers was not yet brought forth; the fireworks, which usually covered the city walls, were not yet lighted: the people

once more began to murmur at this delay, when, in the midst of their impatience, the palace-gates flew open, and the emperor himself appeared, not in splendour or magnificence, but in ordinary habit, followed by the blind, the maimed, and the strangers of the city, all in new clothes, and each carrying in his hand money enough to supply his necessities for the year. The people were at first amazed, but soon perceived the wisdom of their king, who taught them, that to make one man happy was more truly great than having ten thousand captives groaning at the wheels of his chariot.—Adieu.

XVI.

The Man in Black.

Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity

and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to

support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar-men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus dis-

abled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask: he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase; he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his

attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

XVII.

The Man in Black.

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to

act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hairbreadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers, still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them they returned an equivalent in praise, and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table: he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan-chair was sure to set the table in a roar: thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

"As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it; he had no intentions of leaving his children any money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning; for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told, that universal benevolence was what first cemented society: we were taught to consider all the wants

of mankind as our own; to regard the human face divine with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress: in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

"I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armour in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

"The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was in the very middling figure I made in the university; he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, how-

ever, please my tutor, who observed, indeed, that I was a little dull; but at the same time allowed, that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no harm in me.

"After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised (for they always advise when they begin to despise us), they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

"To be obliged to wear a long wig, when I liked a short one, or a black coat, when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty, that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China: with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration, but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him and was so very good-natured.

"Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first, I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable: there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon,

that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we do not know is an easy task: but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my conscience; his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged; my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

"Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reason to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number; she always observed, that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favour. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship, and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival's high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favour; so, after resolving and resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness,

which was no more than——that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes! By way of consolation, however, she observed, that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt, would probably kindle her into sensibility; as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

"Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succour; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies: from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment. My first application was to a city scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money, when he knew I did not want it. I informed him, that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundred for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. 'And pray, sir,' cried my friend, 'do you want all this money?'—'Indeed, I never wanted it more,' returned I.—'I am sorry for that,' cries the scrivener, 'with all my heart; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.'

"From him I flew, with indignation, to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. 'Indeed, Mr. Drybone,' cries my friend, 'I always thought it would come to this. You know, sir, I would not advise you but for your own good! but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance

always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see —you want two hundred pounds. Do you only want two hundred, sir, exactly?'—'To confess a truth,' returned I, 'I shall want three hundred; but then I have another friend, from whom I can borrow the rest.'—'Why, then,' replied my friend, 'if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good), I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend; and then one note will serve for all, you know.'

"Poverty now began to come fast upon me; yet instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds; I was unable to extricate him, except by becoming his bail. When at liberty, he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They spunged up my money while it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

"Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensation different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other: this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to

provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humour; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation; never called down Heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon a half-penny-worth of radishes; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking, that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered that all that happened was best; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often for want of more books and company.

"How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, prefered to a place in the government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at independence myself: my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behaviour. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence, and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half-a-crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare: for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

"I now therefore pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was con-

sequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunks that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbours have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing, that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds, it will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table, by pretending to hate gravy; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give."

XVIII.

The Perfection of the Chinese in Gardening. The Gardens of Virtue and Vice.

The English have not yet brought the art of gardening to the same perfection with the Chinese, but have lately begun to imitate them. Nature is now followed with greater assiduity than formerly: the trees are suffered to shoot out into the utmost luxuriance; the streams, no longer forced from

their native beds, are permitted to wind along the valleys; spontaneous flowers take place of the finished parterre, and the enamelled meadow of the shaven green.

Yet still the English are far behind us in this charming art: their designers have not yet attained the power of uniting instruction with beauty. A European will scarcely conceive my meaning, when I say that there is scarce a garden in China which does not contain some fine moral, couched under the general design, where one is taught wisdom as he walks, and feels the force of some noble truth, or delicate precept, resulting from the dispositions of the groves, streams, or grottos. Permit me to illustrate what I mean by a description of my gardens at Quamsi. My heart still hovers round those scenes of former happiness with pleasure; and I find a satisfaction in enjoying them at this distance, though but in imagination.

You descended from the house between two groves of trees, planted in such a manner, that they were impenetrable to the eye; while on each hand the way was adorned with all that was beautiful in porcelain, statuary, and painting. This passage from the house opened into an area surrounded with rocks, flowers, trees, and shrubs, but all so disposed as if each was the spontaneous production of nature. As you proceeded forward on this lawn, to your right and left hand were two gates, opposite each other, of very different architecture and design; and before you lay a temple, built with rather minute elegance than ostentation.

The right hand gate was planned with the utmost simplicity, or rather rudeness: ivy clasped round the

pillars, the baleful cypress hung over it; time seemed to have destroyed all the smoothness and regularity of the stone; two champions, with lifted clubs, appeared in the act of guarding its access; dragons and serpents were seen in the most hideous attitudes, to deter the spectator from approaching; and the perspective view that lay behind seemed dark and gloomy to the last degree; the stranger was tempted to enter only from the motto, —PERVIA VIRTUTI.

The opposite gate was formed in a very different manner; the architecture was light, elegant, and inviting: flowers hung in wreaths round the pillars; all was finished in the most exact and masterly manner; the very stone of which it was built still preserved its polish; nymphs, wrought by the hand of a master, in the most alluring attributes, beckoned the stranger to approach; while all that lay behind, as far as eye could reach, seemed gay, luxuriant, and capable of affording endless pleasure. The motto itself contributed to invite him; for over the gate were written these words—FACILIS DESCENSUS.

By this time I fancy you begin to perceive that the gloomy gate was designed to represent the road to Virtue, the opposite the more agreeable passage to Vice. It is but natural to suppose, that the spectator was always tempted to enter by the gate which offered him so many allurements. I always in these cases left him to his choice; but generally found that he took to the left, which promised most entertainment.

Immediately upon his entering the gate of Vice the trees and flowers were disposed in such a manner

as to make the most pleasing impression; but, as he walked farther on, he insensibly found the garden assume the air of a wilderness—the landscapes begun to darken—he appeared to go downwards—frightful rocks seemed to hang over his head—gloomy caverns, unexpected precipices, awful ruins, heaps of unburied bones, and terrifying sounds, caused by unseen waters, began to take place of what at first appeared so lovely; it was in vain to attempt returning; the labyrinth was too much perplexed for any but myself to find the way back. In short, when sufficently impressed with the horrors of what he saw, and the imprudence of his choice, I brought him by a hidden door a shorter way back into the area from whence at first he had strayed.

The gloomy gate now presented itself before the stranger; and though there seemed little in its appearance to tempt his curiosity, yet, encouraged by the motto, he gradually proceeded. The darkness of the entrance, the frightful figures that seemed to obstruct his way, the trees of a mournful green, conspired at first to disgust him: as he went forward, however, all began to open and wear a more pleasing appearance; beautiful cascades, beds of flowers, trees loaded with fruit or blossoms, and unexpected brooks, improved the scene; he now found that he was ascending, and as he proceeded all nature grew more beautiful; the prospect widened as he went higher; even the air itself seemed to become more pure. Thus, pleased and happy from unexpected beauties, I at last led him to an arbour, from whence he could view the garden and the whole country around, and where he might own, that the road to Virtue terminated in happiness.

Though from this description you may imagine that a vast tract of ground was necessary to exhibit such a pleasing variety in, yet, be assured, I have seen several gardens in England take up ten times the space which mine did, without half the beauty. A very small extent of ground is enough for an elegant taste; the greater room is required if magnificence is in view. There is no spot, though ever so little, which a skilful designer might not thus improve, so as to convey a delicate allegory, and impress the mind with truths the most useful and necessary.—Adieu.

XIX.

Allegory in the Pursuit of Wisdom.

I BEGIN to have doubts whether wisdom be alone sufficient to make us happy: whether every step we make in refinement is not an inlet into new disquietudes. A mind too vigorous and active serves only to consume the body to which it is joined, as the richest jewels are soonest found to wear their settings.

When we rise in knowledge, as the prospect widens, the objects of our regard become more obscure: and the unlettered peasant, whose views are only directed to the narrow sphere around him, beholds Nature with a finer relish, and tastes her blessings with a keener appetite, than the philosopher whose mind attempts to grasp a universal system.

As I was some days ago pursuing this subject among a circle of my fellow-slaves, an ancient

Guebre of the number, equally remarkable for his piety and wisdom, seemed touched with my conversation, and desired to illustrate what I had been saying with an allegory taken from the Zendavesta of Zoroaster: "By this we shall be taught," says he, "that they who travel in pursuit of wisdom walk only in a circle; and after all their labour, at last return to their pristine ignorance: and in this also we shall see, that enthusiastic confidence or unsatisfying doubts terminate all our inquiries.

"In early times, before myriads of nations covered the earth, the whole human race lived together in one valley. The simple inhabitants, surrounded on every side by lofty mountains, knew no other world but the little spot to which they were confined. They fancied the Heavens bent down to meet the mountain tops, and formed an impenetrable wall to surround them. None had ever yet ventured to climb the steepy cliff, in order to explore those regions that lay beyond it; they knew the nature of the skies only from a tradition, which mentioned their being made of adamant: traditions make up the reasonings of the simple, and serve to silence every inquiry.

"In this sequestered vale, blessed with all the spontaneous productions of Nature, the honeyed blossom, the refreshing breeze, the gliding brook, and golden fruitage, the simple inhabitants seemed happy in themselves, in each other; they desired no greater pleasure, for they knew of none greater; ambition, pride, and envy, were vices unknown among them; and from this peculiar simplicity of its possessors the country was called THE VALLEY OF IGNORANCE.

"At length, however, an unhappy youth, more aspiring than the rest, undertook to climb the mountain's side, and examine the summits which were hitherto deemed inaccessible. The inhabitants from below gazed with wonder at his intrepidity; some applauded his courage, others censured his folly: still, however, he proceeded towards the place where the earth and heavens seemed to unite, and at length arrived at the wished-for height with extreme labour and assiduity.

"His first surprise was to find the skies not, as he expected, within his reach, but still as far off as before. His amazement increased when he saw a wide-extended region lying on the opposite side of the mountain; but it rose to astonishment when he beheld a country, at a distance, more beautiful and alluring than even that he had just left behind.

"As he continued to gaze with wonder, a Genius with a look of infinite modesty, approaching, offered to be his guide and instructor. 'The distant country which you so much admire,' says the angelic being, 'is called the LAND OF CERTAINTY: in that charming retreat sentiment contributes to refine every sensual banquet; the inhabitants are blessed with every solid enjoyment, and still more blessed in a perfect consciousness of their own felicity: ignorance in that country is wholly unknown; all there is satisfaction without alloy, for every pleasure first undergoes the examination of reason. As for me, I am called the Genius of Demonstration, and am stationed here in order to conduct every adventurer to that land of happiness, through those intervening regions you see overhung with fogs and darkness, and horrid with forests, cataracts, caverns, and various other

shapes of danger. But follow me, and in time I may lead you to that distant desirable land of tranquillity.

"The intrepid traveller immediately put himself under the direction of the Genius, and both journeying on together with a slow but agreeable pace, deceived the tediousness of the way by conversation. The beginning of the journey seemed to promise true satisfaction, but, as they proceeded forward, the skies became more gloomy and the way more intricate; they often inadvertently approached the brow of some frightful precipice, or the brink of a torrent, and were obliged to measure back their former way: the gloom increasing as they proceeded, their pace became more slow; they paused at every step, frequently stumbled, and their distrust and timidity increased. The Genius of Demonstration now therefore advised his pupil to grope upon hands and feet, as a method, though more slow, yet less liable to error.

"In this manner they attempted to pursue their journey for some time, when they were overtaken by another Genius, who with a precipitate pace seemed travelling the same way. He was instantly known by the other to be the Genius of Probability. He wore two wide-extended wings at his back, which incessantly waved, without increasing the rapidity of his motion; his countenance betrayed a confidence that the ignorant might mistake for sincerity, and he had but one eye, which was fixed in the middle of his forehead.

"'Servant of Hormizda,' cried he, approaching the mortal pilgrim, 'if thou art travelling to the LAND OF CERTAINTY, how is it possible to arrive there under

the guidance of a Genius who proceeds forward so slowly, and is so little acquainted with the way? Follow me, we shall soon perform the journey to where every pleasure waits our arrival.'

"The peremptory tone in which this Genius spoke, and the speed with which he moved forward, induced the traveller to change his conductor, and leaving his modest companion behind, he proceeded forward with his more confident director, seeming not a little pleased at the increased velocity of his motion.

"But soon he found reason to repent. Whenever a torrent crossed their way, his guide taught him to despise the obstacle by plunging him in; whenever a precipice presented, he was directed to fling himself forward. Thus each moment miraculously escaping, his repeated escapes only served to increase his guide's temerity. He led him, therefore, forward, amidst infinite difficulties, till they arrived at the borders of an ocean, which appeared unnavigable from the black mists that lay upon its surface. Its unquiet waves were of the darkest hue, and gave a lively representation of the various agitation of the human mind.

"The Genius of Probability now confessed his temerity; owned his being an improper guide to the LAND OF CERTAINTY, a country where no mortal had ever been permitted to arrive; but, at the same time, offered to supply the traveller with another conductor, who should carry him to the LAND OF CONFIDENCE, a region where the inhabitants lived with the utmost tranquillity, and tasted almost as much satisfaction as if in the LAND OF CERTAINTY. Not waiting for a reply, he stamped three times on the

ground, and called forth the Demon of Error, a gloomy fiend of the servants of Arimanes. The yawning earth gave up the reluctant savage, who seemed unable to bear the light of the day. His stature was enormous, his colour black and hideous, his aspect betrayed a thousand varying passions, and he spread forth pinions that were fitted for the most rapid flight. The traveller at first was shocked at the spectre; but, finding him obedient to a superior power, he assumed his former tranquillity.

"'I have called you to duty,' cries the Genius to the Demon; 'to bear on your back a son of mortality over the OCEAN OF DOUBTS, into the LAND OF CONFIDENCE; I expect you will perform your commission with punctuality. And as for you,' continued the Genius, addressing the traveller, 'when once I have bound this fillet round your eyes, let no voice of persuasion, nor threats the most terrifying, induce you to unbind it, in order to look round; keep the fillet fast, look not at the ocean below, and you may certainly expect to arrive at a region of pleasure.'

"Thus saying, and the traveller's eyes being covered, the Demon, muttering curses, raised him on his back, and instantly, upborne by his strong pinions, directed his flight among the clouds. Neither the loudest thunder, nor the most angry tempest, could persuade the traveller to unbind his eyes. The Demon directed his flight downwards, and skimmed the surface of the ocean; a thousand voices, some with loud invectives, others in the sarcastic tones of contempt, vainly endeavoured to persuade him to look round; but he still continued to keep his eyes covered, and would in all probability have arrived at the happy land, had not flattery

effected what other means could not perform. For now he heard himself welcomed on every side to the promised land, and an universal shout of joy was sent forth at his safe arrival. The wearied traveller, desirous of seeing the long wished-for country, at length pulled the fillet from his eyes, and ventured to look round him. But he had unloosed the band too soon; he was not yet above half way over. The Demon, who was still hovering in the air, and had produced those sounds only in order to deceive, was now freed from his commission; wherefore, throwing the astonished traveller from his back, the unhappy youth fell headlong into the subjacent OCEAN OF DOUBTS, from whence he never after was seen to rise."

XX.

EXCELLENCE OF BRITISH JUSTICE.

WHEN Parmenio, the Grecian, had done something which excited a universal shout from the surrounding multitude, he was instantly struck with the doubt, that what had their approbation must certainly be wrong; and turning to a philosopher who stood near him, "Pray, sir," says he, "pardon me; I fear I have been guilty of some absurdity."

You know that I am, not less than him, a despiser of the multitude; you know that I equally detest flattery to the great; yet so many circumstances have concurred to give a lustre to the latter part of the present English monarch's reign, that I cannot avoid acknowledging the crowd, for once, just in their unanimous approbation.

Yet think not that battles gained, dominion extended, or enemies brought to submission, are the virtues which at present claim my admiration. Were the reigning monarch only famous for his victories, I should regard his character with indifference: the boast of heroism in this enlightened age is justly regarded as a qualification of a very subordinate rank, and mankind now begin to look with becoming horror on these foes to man. The virtue in this aged monarch which I have at present in view is one of a much more exalted nature, is one of the most difficult attainment, is the least praised of all kingly virtues, and yet deserves the greatest praise; the virtue I mean is JUSTICE—a strict administration of justice, without severity and without favour.

Of all virtues this is the most difficult to be practised by a king who has a power to pardon. All men, even tyrants themselves, lean to mercy when unbiassed by passions or interest; the heart naturally persuades to forgiveness, and pursuing the dictates of this pleasing deceiver, we are led to prefer our private satisfaction to public utility. What a thorough love for the public, what a strong command over the passions, what a finely-conducted judgment, must he possess, who opposes the dictates of reason to those of his heart, and prefers the future interest of his people to his own immediate satisfaction!

If still to a man's own natural bias for tenderness we add the numerous solicitations made by a criminal's friends for mercy; if we survey a king not only opposing his own feelings, but reluctantly refusing those he regards, and this to satisfy the

public, whose cries he may never hear, whose gratitude he may never receive; this surely is true greatness! Let us fancy ourselves for a moment in this just old man's place; surrounded by numbers all soliciting the same favour—a favour that nature disposes us to grant, where the inducements to pity are laid before us in the strongest light, suppliants at our feet, some ready to resent a refusal, none opposing a compliance; let us, I say, suppose ourselves in such a situation, and I fancy we should find ourselves more apt to act the character of good-natured men than of upright magistrates.

What contributes to raise justice above all other kingly virtues is, that it is seldom attended with a due share of applause, and those who practise it must be influenced by greater motives than empty fame: the people are generally well pleased with a remission of punishment, and all that wears the appearance of humanity; it is the wise alone who are capable of discerning that impartial justice is the truest mercy: they know it to be very difficult at once to compassionate, and yet condemn, an object that pleads for tenderness.

I have been led into this commonplace train of thought by a late striking instance in this country of the impartiality of justice, and of the king's inflexible resolution of inflicting punishment where it was justly due. A man of the first quality, in a fit either of passion, melancholy, or madness, murdered his servant: it was expected that his station in life would have lessened the ignominy of his punishment; however, he was arraigned, condemned, and underwent the same degrading death with the meanest malefactor. It was well

considered that virtue alone is true nobility; and that he, whose actions sink him even beneath the vulgar, has no right to those distinctions which should be the rewards only of merit: it was perhaps considered that crimes were more heinous among the higher classes of people, as necessity exposes them to fewer temptations.

Over all the East, even China not excepted, a person of the same quality, guilty of such a crime, might by giving up a share of his fortune to the judge, buy off his sentence. There are several countries, even in Europe, where the servant is entirely the property of his master: if a slave kills his lord, he dies by the most excruciating tortures; but if the circumstances are reversed, a small fine buys off the punishment of the offender. Happy the country where all are equal, and where those who sit as judges have too much integrity to receive a bribe, and too much honour to pity, from a similitude of the prisoner's title or circumstances with their own! Such is England: yet think not that it was always equally famed for this strict impartiality. There was a time, even here, when title softened the rigours of the law, when dignified wretches were suffered to live, and continue for years an equal disgrace to justice and nobility.

To this day, in a neighbouring country, the great are often most scandalously pardoned for the most scandalous offences. A person is still alive among them who has more than once deserved the most ignominious severity of justice. His being of the blood royal, however, was thought a sufficient atonement for his being a disgrace to humanity. This remarkable personage took pleasure in shooting

at the passengers from the top of his palace; and in this most princely amusement he usually spent some time every day. He was at length arraigned by the friends of a person whom in this manner he had killed, was found guilty of the charge, and condemned to die. His merciful monarch pardoned him, in consideration of his rank and quality. The unrepenting criminal soon after renewed his usual entertainment, and in the same manner killed another man. He was a second time condemned; and, strange to think, a second time received his majesty's pardon! Would you believe it? A third time the very same man was guilty of the very same offence: a third time, therefore, the laws of his country found him guilty—I wish, for the honour of humanity, I could suppress the rest—a third time he was pardoned! Will you not think such a story too extraordinary for belief? Will you not think me describing the savage inhabitants of Congo? Alas! the story is but too true; and the country where it was transacted regards itself as the politest in Europe!—Adieu.

XXI.

English Liberty.

Ask an Englishman what nation in the world enjoys most freedom, and he immediately answers, his own. Ask him in what that freedom principally consists, and he is instantly silent. This happy pre-eminence does not arise from the people's enjoying a larger share in legislation than elsewhere, for in this

particular several states in Europe excel them; nor does it arise from a greater exemption from taxes, for few countries pay more; it does not proceed from their being restrained by fewer laws, for no people are burdened with so many; nor does it particularly consist in the security of their property, for property is pretty well secured in every polite state in Europe.

How, then, are the English more free—for more free they certainly are—than the people of any other country, or under any other form of government whatever? Their freedom consists in their enjoying all the advantages of democracy, with this superior prerogative borrowed from monarchy, that the severity of their laws may be relaxed without endangering the constitution.

In a monarchical state, in which the constitution is strongest, the laws may be relaxed without danger; for though the people should be unanimous in the breach of any one in particular, yet still there is an effective power superior to the people, capable of enforcing obedience, whenever it may be proper to inculcate the law either towards the support or welfare of the community.

But in all those governments where laws derive their sanction from the people alone, transgressions cannot be overlooked without bringing the constitution into danger. They who transgress the law in such a case are those who prescribe it, by which means it loses not only its influence, but its sanction. In every republic the laws must be strong, because the constitution is feeble; they must resemble an Asiatic husband, who is justly jealous, because

he knows himself impotent. Thus, in Holland, Switzerland, and Genoa, new laws are not frequently enacted, but the old ones are observed with unremitting severity. In such republics, therefore, the people are slaves to laws of their own making, little less than in unmixed monarchies, where they are slaves to the will of one subject to frailties like themselves.

In England, from a variety of happy accidents, their constitution is just strong enough, or, if you will, monarchical enough, to permit a relaxation of the severity of laws, and yet those laws still to remain sufficiently strong to govern the people. This is the most perfect state of civil liberty of which we can form any idea; here we see a greater number of laws than in any other country, while the people at the same time obey only such as are immediately conducive to the interests of society; several are unnoticed, many unknown; some kept to be revived and enforced upon proper occasions; others left to grow obsolete, even without the necessity of abrogation.

There is scarcely an Englishman who does not almost every day of his life offend with impunity against some express law, and for which, in a certain conjuncture of circumstances, he would not receive punishment. Gaming-houses, preaching at prohibited places, assembled crowds, nocturnal amusements, public shows, and a hundred other instances, are forbid and frequented. These prohibitions are useful; though it be prudent in their magistrates, and happy for the people, that they are not enforced, and none but the venal or mercenary attempt to enforce them.

The law in this case, like an indulgent parent, still keeps the rod, though the child is seldom corrected. Were those pardoned offences to rise into enormity, were they likely to obstruct the happiness of society, or endanger the state, it is then that justice would resume her terrors, and punish those faults she had so often overlooked with indulgence. It is to this ductility of the laws that an Englishman owes the freedom he enjoys superior to others in a more popular government: every step, therefore, the constitution takes toward a democratic form, every diminution of the regal authority, is, in fact, a diminution of the subject's freedom: but every attempt to render the government more popular not only impairs natural liberty, but even will at last dissolve the political constitution.

Every popular government seems calculated to last only for a time: it grows rigid with rage; new laws are multiplying, and the old continue in force; the subjects are oppressed, burdened with a multiplicity of legal injunctions; there are none from whom to expect redress, and nothing but a strong convulsion in the state can vindicate them into former liberty: thus the people of Rome, a few great ones excepted, found more real freedom under their emperors, though tyrants, than they had experienced in the old age of the commonwealth, in which their laws were become numerous and painful, in which new laws were every day enacting, and the old ones executed with rigour. They even refuse to be reinstated in their former prerogatives, upon an offer made them to this purpose; for they actually found emperors the

only means of softening the rigours of their constitution.

The constitution of England is at present possessed of the strength of its native oak and the flexibility of the bending tamarisk; but should the people at any time, with a mistaken zeal, pant after an imaginary freedom, and fancy that abridging monarchy was increasing these privileges, they would be very much mistaken, since every jewel plucked from the crown of majesty would only be made use of as a bribe to corruption; it might enrich the few who shared it among them, but would in fact impoverish the public.

As the Roman senators, by slow and imperceptible degrees, became masters of the people, yet still flattered them with a show of freedom, while themselves only were free: so it is possible for a body of men, while they stand up for privileges, to grow into an exuberance of power themselves; and the public become actually dependent, while some of its individuals only govern.

If then, my friend, there should in this country ever be on the throne a king who, through goodnature or age, should give up the smallest part of his prerogative to the people; if there should come a minister of merit and popularity—but I have room for no more.—Adieu.

XXII.

The Philosopher is visited by a Bookseller.

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge, whether he had lately published anything new? I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer, than I would sell pork in the dog days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions paper, may amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade."—"I must confess, sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal."—"Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods; but,

without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade: my books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new: and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar; but that is not my way; I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamour arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected."—"But, sir," interrupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you published; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?"—"As to that, sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favour to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, sir, here they are; diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis*, a translation of several medical precepts for the use of such physicians as do not understand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manners of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils, and making crayons, by the Right Hon. the Earl of——. *Item*, the muster-master-

general, or the review of reviews."—"Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity with regard to title-pages is satisfied; I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history or an epic poem."—"Bless me," cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humour. Strokes, sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line."—Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes?" replied I; "for I must confess I can see no other."—"And pray, sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see anything good now-a-days, that is not filled with strokes—and dashes?—Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humour. I bought a piece last season that had no other merit on earth than nine hundred and ninety-nine breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's, three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a firework."—"I fancy, then, sir, you were a considerable gainer?"—"It must be owned the piece did pay; but, upon the whole, I cannot boast of last winter's success; I gained by two murders; but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my Direct Road to an estate, but the Infernal Guide brought me up again, Ah, sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master; filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humour; he wisely considered, that moral and humour at the same time were quite overdoing the

business."—"To what purpose was the book then published?" cried I.—"Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after: of all kinds of writing, that goes off best at present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics: close was the word, always very right and very dull, ever on the safe side of an argument; yet, with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favour. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him, at the beginning of every month, as a censor on the works of others. In short I found him a treasure; no merit could escape him: but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk."—"But are there not some works," interrupted I, "that, from the very manner of their composition, must be exempt from criticism; particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?"—"There is no work whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller; "even though you wrote in Chinese, he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese letters, for instance; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come; should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple and perfectly natural, he has then the strongest reason

to exclaim. He may, with a sneer, send you back to China for readers. He may observe that, after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious; but the worst of all is, the public, in such a case, will anticipate his censures, and leave you, with all your uninstructive simplicity, to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation, and, what I should fear more, that of the public, I would, in such a case, write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had; nor would I appear more stupid than nature has made me."—"Here, then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power: unnatural, un-Eastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible, would be the whole cry. Sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat."—"Head of my father!" said I, "sure there are but two ways; the door must either be shut or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural."—"Be what you will, we shall criticise you," returned the bookseller, "and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, sir, it is time I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall pay the obligation with gratitude."—"What, sir!" replied I, "put my name to a work which I have not written? Never! while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself." The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardour of the bookseller's conversation; and, after about half an hour's disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew.—Adieu.

XXIII.

The Present Situation of the Several States of Europe.

The distant sounds of music, that catch new sweetness as they vibrate through the long-drawn valley, are not more pleasing to the ear than tidings of a far distant friend.

I have just received two hundred of thy letters by the Russian caravan, descriptive of the manners of Europe. You have left it to geographers to determine the site of their mountains and extent of their lakes, seeming only employed in discovering the genius, the government, and disposition of the people.

In those letters I perceive a journal of the operations of your mind upon whatever occurs, rather than a detail of your travels from one building to another: of your taking a draft of this ruin, or that obelisk; of paying so many *tomans* for this commodity, or laying up a proper store for the passage of some new wilderness.

From your accounts of Russia, I learn that this nation is again relaxing into pristine barbarity; that its great emperor wanted a life of an hundred years more to bring about his vast designs. A savage people may be resembled to their own forests; a few years are sufficient to clear away the obstructions to agriculture, but it requires many ere the ground acquires a proper degree of fertility: the Russians, attached to their ancient prejudices, again renew their hatred to strangers, and indulge

every former brutal excess. So true it is, that the revolutions of wisdom are slow and difficult; the revolutions of folly or ambition precipitate and easy. "We are not to be astonished," says Confucius, "that the wise walk more slowly in their road to virtue, than fools in their passage to vice; since passion drags us along, while wisdom only points the way."

The German empire, that remnant of the majesty of ancient Rome, appears, from your accounts, on the eve of dissolution. The members of its vast body want every tie of government to unite them, and seem feebly held together only by their respect for ancient institutions. The very name of country and countrymen, which in other nations makes one of the strongest bonds of government, has been here for some time laid aside; each of its inhabitants seeming more proud of being called from the petty state which gives him birth than by the well-known title of German.

This government may be regarded in the light of a severe master and a feeble opponent. The states which are now subject to the laws of the empire, are only watching a proper occasion to fling off the yoke; and those which are become too powerful to be compelled to obedience, now begin to think of dictating in their turn. The struggles in this state are, therefore, not in order to preserve, but to destroy, the ancient constitution: if one side succeeds, the government must become despotic; if the other, several states will subsist, without even nominal subordination: but in either case the Germanic constitution will be no more.

Sweden, on the contrary, though now seemingly

a strenuous assertor of its liberties, is probably only hastening on to despotism. Their senators, while they pretend to vindicate the freedom of the people, are only establishing their own independence. The deluded people will, however, at last perceive the miseries of an aristocratical government; they will perceive that the administration of a society of men is ever more painful than that of one only. They will fly from this most oppressive of all forms, where one single member is capable of controlling the whole, to take refuge under the throne, which will ever be attentive to their complaints. No people long endure an aristocratical government, when they can apply elsewhere for redress. The lower orders of people may be enslaved for a time by a number of tyrants, but, upon the first opportunity, they will ever take a refuge in despotism or democracy.

As the Swedes are making concealed approaches to despotism, the French, on the other hand, are imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom. When I consider that those parliaments (the members of which are all created by the court, the presidents of which can act only by immediate direction) presume even to mention privileges and freedom, who, till of late, received instructions from the throne with implicit humility; when this is considered, I cannot help fancying that the genius of freedom has entered that kingdom in disguise. If they have but three weak monarchs more successively on the throne, the mask will be laid aside, and the country will once more be free.

When I compare the figure which the Dutch

make in Europe with that they assume in Asia, I am struck with surprise. In Asia, I find them the great lords of all the Indian seas; in Europe, the timid inhabitants of a paltry state. No longer the sons of freedom, but of avarice; no longer assertors of their rights by courage, but by negotiations, fawning on those who insult them, and crouching under the rod of every neighbouring power. Without a friend to save them in distress, and without virtue to save themselves, their government is poor, and their private wealth will serve but to invite some neighbouring invader.

I long with impatience for your letters from England, Denmark, Holland, and Italy? yet why wish for relations which only describe new calamities, which show that ambition and avarice are equally terrible in every region!—Adieu.

XXIV.

Lessons to a Youth entering the World.

The news of your freedom lifts the load of former anxiety from my mind; I can now think of my son without regret, applaud his resignation under calamities, and his conduct in extricating himself from them.

You are now free, just let loose from the bondage of a hard master: this is the crisis of your fate; and as you now manage fortune, succeeding life will be marked with happiness or misery. A few years' perseverance in prudence, which at your age is

but another name for virtue, will ensure comfort, pleasure, tranquillity, esteem; too eager an enjoyment of every good that now offers will reverse the medal, and present you with poverty, anxiety, remorse, contempt.

As it had been observed, that none are better qualified to give others advice, than those who have taken the least of it themselves; so in this respect I find myself perfectly authorized to offer mine, even though I should waive my paternal authority upon this occasion.

The most usual way among young men who have no resolution of their own is, first to ask one friend's advice, and follow it for some time; then to ask advice of another, and turn to that; so of a third: still unsteady, always changing. However, be assured, that every change of this nature is for the worse: people may tell you of your being unfit for some peculiar occupations in life; but heed them not; whatever employment you follow with perseverance and assiduity will be found fit for you; it will be your support in youth, and comfort in age. In learning the useful part of every profession very moderate abilities will suffice; even if the mind be a little balanced with stupidity, it may in this case be useful. Great abilities have always been less serviceable to the possessors than moderate ones. Life has been compared to a race; but the allusion still improves by observing, that the most swift are ever the least manageable.

To know one profession only, is enough for one man to know; and this (whatever the professors may tell you to the contrary) is soon learned. Be contented, therefore, with one good employment; for

if you understand two at a time, people will give you business in neither.

A conjurer and a tailor once happened to converse together. "Alas!" cries the tailor, "what an unhappy poor creature am I; if people should ever take it in their heads to live without clothes, I am undone; I have no other trade to have recourse to." —"Indeed, friend, I pity you sincerely," replies the conjurer; "but, thank Heaven, things are not quite so bad with me; for if one trick should fail, I have a hundred tricks more for them yet. However, if at any time you are reduced to beggary, apply to me, and I will relieve you." A famine overspread the land; the tailor made a shift to live, because his customers could not be without clothes; but the poor conjurer, with all his hundred tricks, could find none that had money to throw away: it was in vain that he promised to eat fire, or to vomit pins; no single creature would relieve him, till he was at last obliged to beg from the very tailor whose calling he had formerly despised.

There are no obstructions more fatal to fortune than pride and resentment. If you must resent injuries at all, at least suppress your indignation until you become rich, and then show away: the resentment of a poor man is like the efforts of a harmless insect to sting; it may get him crushed, but cannot defend him. Who values that anger which is consumed only in empty menaces?

Once upon a time, a goose fed its young by a pond side; and a goose, in such circumstances, is always extremely proud, and excessively punctilious. If any other animal, without the least design to offend, happened to pass that way, the goose was im-

mediately at him. The pond, she said, was hers, and she would maintain a right in it, and support her honour, while she had a bill to hiss, or a wing to flutter. In this manner she drove away ducks, pigs, and chickens; nay, even the insidious cat was seen to scamper. A lounging mastiff, however, happened to pass by, and thought it no harm if he should lap a little of the water, as he was thirsty. The guardian goose flew at him like a fury, pecked at him with her beak, and flapped him with her feathers. The dog grew angry, and had twenty times a good mind to give her a sly snap; but suppressing his indignation, because his master was nigh, "Plague take thee," cries he, "for a fool! sure those who have neither strength nor weapons to fight, at least should be civil: that fluttering and hissing of thine may one day get thine head snapped off, but it can neither injure thy enemies, nor ever protect thee." So saying, he went forward to the pond, quenched his thirst in spite of the goose, and followed his master.

Another obstruction to the fortune of youth is, that while they are willing to take offence from none, they are also equally desirous of giving nobody offence. From hence they endeavour to please all, comply with every request, attempt to suit themselves to every company, have no will of their own, but, like wax, catch every contiguous impression. By thus attempting to give universal satisfaction, they at last find themselves miserably disappointed: to bring the generality of admirers on our side, it is sufficient to attempt pleasing a very few.

A painter of eminence was once resolved to finish a piece which should please the whole world. When,

therefore, he had drawn a picture, in which his utmost skill was exhausted, it was exposed in the public market-place, with directions at the bottom for every spectator to mark with a brush, which lay by, every limb and feature which seemed erroneous. The spectators came, and in general applauded; but each, willing to show his talent at criticism, marked whatever he thought proper. At evening, when the painter came, he was mortified to find the whole picture one universal blot—not a single stroke that was not stigmatized with marks of disapprobation: not satisfied with this trial, the next day he was resolved to try them in a different manner, and, exposing his picture as before, desired that every spectator would mark those beauties he approved or admired. The people complied; and the artist returning, found his picture replete with the marks of beauty: every stroke that had been yesterday condemned, now received the character of approbation. "Well," cries the painter, "I now find that the best way to please one half of the world, is not to mind what the other half says; since what are faults in the eyes of these, shall be by those regarded as beauties."—Adieu.

XXV.

The Great exchange Happiness for Show.

The princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well, by presenting them with about two yards of blue

riband, which is worn about the shoulder. They who are honoured with this mark of distinction are called knights, and the king himself is always the head of the order. This is a very frugal method of recompensing the most important services; and it is very fortunate for kings that their subjects are satisfied with such trifling rewards. Should a nobleman happen to lose his leg in a battle, the king presents him with two yards of riband, and he is paid for the loss of his limb. Should an ambassador spend all his paternal fortune in supporting the honour of his country abroad, the king presents him with two yards of riband, which is to be considered as an equivalent to his estate. In short, while an European king has a yard of blue or green riband left, he need be under no apprehensions of wanting statesmen, generals, and soldiers.

I cannot sufficiently admire those kingdoms in which men with large patrimonial estates are willing thus to undergo real hardships for empty favours. A person, already possessed of a competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition, feels many real inconveniences from his station, while it procures him no real happiness that he was not possessed of before. He could eat, drink, and sleep, before he became a courtier, as well, perhaps better, than when invested with his authority. He could command flatterers in a private station, as well as in his public capacity, and indulge at home every favourite inclination, uncensured and unseen by the people.

What real good, then, does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any.

Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Was he, by having his one thousand made two, thus enabled to enjoy two wives, or eat two dinners, then indeed he might be excused for undergoing some pain in order to extend the sphere of his enjoyments. But, on the contrary, he finds his desire for pleasure often lessen, as he takes pains to be able to improve it; and his capacity of enjoyment diminishes as his fortune happens to increase.

Instead, therefore, of regarding the great with envy, I generally consider them with some share of compassion. I look upon them as a set of good-natured, misguided people, who are indebted to us, and not to themselves, for all the happiness they enjoy. For our pleasure, and not their own, they sweat under a cumbrous heap of finery; for our pleasure, the lacqueyed train, the slow-parading pageant, with all gravity of grandeur, moves in review: a single coat, or a single footman, answers all the purposes of the most indolent refinement as well; and those who have twenty, may be said to keep one for their own pleasure, and the other nineteen merely for ours. So true is the observation of Confucius, "That we take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy, than in endeavouring to think so ourselves."

But though this desire of being seen, of being made the subject of discourse, and of supporting the dignities of an exalted station, be troublesome enough to the ambitious, yet it is well for society that there are men thus willing to exchange ease and safety for danger and a riband. We lose

nothing by their vanity, and it would be unkind to endeavour to deprive a child of its rattle. If a duke or a duchess are willing to carry a long train for our entertainment, so much the worse for themselves; if they choose to exhibit in public, with a hundred lacqueys and mamelukes in their equipage, for our entertainment, still so much the worse for themselves; it is the spectators alone who give and receive the pleasure; they only are the sweating figures that swell the pageant.

A mandarine, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze, who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarine. "Friend, I never gave thee any of my jewels."—"No," replied the other; "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself; so there is no difference between us, except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire."—Adieu.

XXVI.

Fortune is proved to be not Blind.

The Europeans are themselves blind, who describe Fortune without sight. No first-rate beauty ever had finer eyes, or saw more clearly: they who have no other trade but seeking their fortune, need never hope to find her; coquette-like, she flies from her

pursuers, and at last fixes on the plodding mechanic, who stays at home, and minds his business.

I am amazed how men call her blind, when, by the company she keeps, she seems so very discerning. Wherever you see a gaming-table, be very sure Fortune is not there; wherever you see a house with the doors open, be sure Fortune is not there; when you see a man whose pocket-holes are laced with gold, be satisfied Fortune is not there: wherever you see a beautiful woman good-natured and obliging, be convinced Fortune is never there. In short, she is ever seen accompanying industry, and as often trundling a wheelbarrow as lolling in a coach and six.

If you would make Fortune your friend, or, to personize her no longer, if you desire, my son, to be rich, and have money, be more eager to save than acquire: when people say, Money is to be got here, and money is to be got there, take no notice; mind your own business; stay where you are, and secure all you can get without stirring. When you hear that your neighbour has picked up a purse of gold in the street, never run out into the same street, looking about you in order to pick up such another; or when you are informed that he has made a fortune in one branch of business, never change your own in order to be his rival. Do not desire to be rich all at once; but patiently add farthing to farthing. Perhaps you despise the petty sum? and yet they who want a farthing, and have no friend that will lend them it, think farthings very good things. Whang, the foolish miller, when he wanted a farthing in his distress, found that no friend would lend, because they knew he wanted.

Did you ever read the story of Whang in our books of Chinese learning? he who, despising small sums, and grasping at all, lost even what he had.

Whang, the miller, was naturally avaricious; nobody loved money better than he, or more respected those that had it. When people would talk of a rich man in company, Whang would say, I know him very well; he and I have been long acquainted; he and I are intimate; he stood for a child of mine; but if ever a poor man was mentioned, he had not the least knowledge of the man; he might be very well for aught he knew; but he was not fond of many acquaintances, and loved to choose his own company.

Whang, however, with all his eagerness for riches, was in reality poor; he had nothing but the profits of his mill to support him; but though these were small, they were certain; while his mill stood and went, he was sure of eating; and his frugality was such, that he every day laid some money by, which he would at intervals count and contemplate with much satisfaction. Yet still his acquisitions were not equal to his desires; he only found himself above want, whereas he desired to be possessed of affluence.

One day, as he was indulging these wishes, he was informed that a neighbour of his had found a pan of money under ground, having dreamed of it three nights running before. These tidings were daggers to the heart of poor Whang. "Here am I," says he, "toiling and moiling from morning to night for a few paltry farthings, while neighbour Hunks only goes quietly to bed, and dreams himself into thousands before morning. Oh that I could dream like

him! with what pleasure would I dig round the pan; how slily would I carry it home; not even my wife should see me; and then, oh, the pleasure of thrusting one's arm into a heap of gold up to the elbow!"

Such reflections only served to make the miller unhappy; he discontinued his former assiduity; he was quite disgusted with small gains, and his customers began to forsake him. Every day he repeated the wish, and every night laid himself down in order to dream. Fortune, that was for a long time unkind, at last, however, seemed to smile upon his distresses, and indulged him with the wished-for vision. He dreamed that under a certain part of the foundation of his mill there was concealed a monstrous pan of gold and diamonds, buried deep in the ground, and covered with a large flat stone. He rose up, thanked the stars that were at last pleased to take pity on his sufferings, and concealed his good luck from every person, as is usual in money dreams, in order to have the vision repeated the two succeeding nights, by which he should be certain of its veracity. His wishes in this also were answered; he still dreamed of the same pan of money, in the very same place.

Now, therefore, it was past a doubt; so, getting up early the third morning, he repairs alone, with a mattock in his hand, to the mill, and began to undermine that part of the wall which the vision directed. The first omen of success that he met was a broken mug; digging still deeper, he turns up a house tile quite new and entire. At last, after much digging, he came to the broad flat stone, but then so large, that it was beyond one man's strength to remove it.

"Here," cried he in raptures, to himself, "here it is! under this stone there is room for a very large pan of diamonds indeed! I must e'en go home to my wife, and tell her the whole affair, and get her to assist me in turning it up." Away therefore he goes, and acquaints his wife with every circumstance of their good fortune. Her raptures on this occasion may easily be imagined; she flew round his neck, and embraced him in an agony of joy: but those transports, however, did not delay their eagerness to know the exact sum: returning, therefore, speedily together to the place where Whang had been digging, there they found—not indeed the expected treasure, but the mill, their only support, undermined and fallen.—Adieu.

XXVII.

The Preference of Grace to Beauty.

I still remain at Terki, where I have received that money which was remitted here in order to release me from captivity. My fair companion still improves in my esteem; the more I know her mind, her beauty becomes more poignant: she appears charming, even among the daughters of Circassia.

Yet, were I to examine her beauty with the art of a statuary, I should find numbers here that far surpass her; nature has not granted her all the boasted Circassian regularity of feature, and yet she greatly exceeds the fairest of the country in the art of seizing the affections. "Whence," have I often said to myself, "this resistless magic that attends

even moderate charms? Though I regard the beauties of the country with admiration, every interview weakens the impression; but the form of Zelis grows upon my imagination—I never behold her without an increase of tenderness and respect. Whence this injustice of the mind, in preferring imperfect beauty to that which nature seems to have finished with care? Whence the infatuation that he, whom a comet could not amaze, should be astonished at a meteor?" When reason was thus fatigued to find an answer, my imagination pursued the subject, and this was the result.

I fancied myself placed between two landscapes, this called the Region of Beauty, and that the Valley of the Graces: the one adorned with all that luxuriant nature could bestow; the fruits of various climates adorned the trees—the grove resounded with music—the gale breathed perfume—every charm that could arise from symmetry and exact distribution were here conspicuous—the whole offering a prospect of pleasure without end. The Valley of the Graces, on the other hand, seemed by no means so inviting; the streams and the groves appeared just as they usually do in frequented countries: no magnificent parterres, no concert in the grove, the rivulet was edged with weeds, and the rook joined its voice to that of the nightingale. All was simplicity and nature.

The most striking objects ever first allure the traveller. I entered the Region of Beauty with increased curiosity, and promised myself endless satisfaction in being introduced to the presiding goddess. I perceived several strangers, who entered with the same design; and what surprised me not a

little was, to see several others hastening to leave this abode of seeming felicity.

After some fatigue, I had at last the honour of being introduced to the goddess who represented Beauty in person. She was seated on a throne, at the foot of which stood several strangers, lately introduced like me, all regarding her form in ecstasy.

"Ah, what eyes! what lips! how clear her complexion! how perfect her shape!" At these exclamations Beauty, with downcast eyes, would endeavour to counterfeit modesty, but soon again looking round as if to confirm every spectator in his favourable sentiments: sometimes she would attempt to allure us by smiles; and at intervals would bridle back, in order to inspire us with respect as well as tenderness.

This ceremony lasted for some time, and had so much employed our eyes that we had forgot all this while that the goddess was silent. We soon, however, began to perceive the defect. "What," said we, among each other, "are we to have nothing but languishing airs, soft looks, and inclinations of the head? Will the goddess only design to satisfy our eyes?" Upon this, one of the company stepped up to present her with some fruits he had gathered by the way. She received the present most sweetly smiling, and with one of the whitest hands in the world, but still not a word escaped her lips.

I now found that my companions grew weary of their homage; they went off one by one, and resolving not to be left behind, I offered to go in my turn, when, just at the door of the temple, I was called back by a female whose name was Pride, and

who seemed displeased at the behaviour of the company. "Where are you hastening?" said she to me with an angry air; "the goddess of Beauty is here."—"I have been to visit her, madam," replied I, "and find her more beautiful even than report had made her."—"And why then will you leave her?" added the female.—"I have seen her long enough," returned I; "I have got all her features by heart. Her eyes are still the same. Her nose is a very fine one, but it is still just such a nose now as it was half an hour ago: could she throw a little more mind into her face, perhaps I should be for wishing to have more of her company."—"What signifies," replied my female, "whether she has a mind or not? has she any occasion for a mind, so formed as she is by nature? If she had a common face, indeed, there might be some reason for thinking to improve it; but when features are already perfect, every alteration would but impair them. A fine face is already at the point of perfection, and a fine lady should endeavour to keep it so: the impression it would receive from thought would but disturb its whole economy."

To this speech I gave no reply, but made the best of my way to the Valley of the Graces. Here I found all those who before had been my companions in the Region of Beauty, now upon the same errand.

As we entered the valley, the prospect insensibly seemed to improve; we found everything so natural, so domestic, and pleasing, that our minds, which before were congealed in admiration, now relaxed into gaiety and good-humour. We had designed to pay our respects to the presiding

goddess, but she was nowhere to be found. One of our companions asserted that her temple lay to the right, another to the left, a third insisted that it was straight before us, and a fourth, that we had left it behind. In short, we found everything familiar and charming, but could not determine where to seek the Grace in person.

In this agreeable incertitude we passed several hours, and though very desirous of finding the goddess, by no means impatient of the delay. Every part of the valley presented some minute beauty, which, without offering itself, at once stole upon the soul, and captivated us with the charms of our retreat. Still, however, we continued to search, and might still have continued, had we not been interrupted by a voice, which, though we could not see from whence it came, addressed us in this manner: —"If you would find the goddess of Grace, seek her not under one form, for she assumes a thousand. Ever changing under the eye of inspection, her variety, rather than her figure, is pleasing. In contemplating her beauty, the eye glides over every perfection with giddy delight, and capable of fixing nowhere, is charmed with the whole. She is now Contemplation with solemn look, again Compassion with humid eye; she now sparkles with joy, soon every feature speaks distress; her looks at times invite our approach, at others repress our presumption: the goddess cannot be properly called beautiful under any one of these forms, but by combining them all she becomes irresistibly pleasing." —Adieu.

XXVIII.

English Shops and Shopkeepers.

The shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door, informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intent to cheat him.

I was this morning to buy silk for a nightcap. Immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civillest people alive; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was the better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for nightcaps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, "you must not pretend to instruct me in silks; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy bungees."—"That may be," cried the mercer, who, I afterwards found, had never contradicted a man in his life: "I cannot pretend to say but they may; but I can assure you, my Lady Trail has had a sack from this piece this very morning."—"But, friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sack from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a nightcap."—"That may be," returned he again; "yet what becomes a pretty lady, will at any time look well on

a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face, that even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a nightcap.

While this business was consigned to his journeyman, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, "There," cries he, "there's a beauty; my Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birthnight this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats."—"But I don't want a waistcoat," replied I. "Not want a waistcoat!" returned the mercer: "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be always well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice, that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was really a good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning gowns. "Perhaps, sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn." Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honourable, I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing."—"I am no lord,"

interrupted I.—"I beg pardon," cried he; "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Conscience, sir, conscience is my way of dealing; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting, with some astonishment, how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper, and moulding me to his inclinations. I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine: yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigour, uniformity, and success.—Adieu.

XXIX.

The Evil of increasing Penal Laws.

I have always regarded the spirit of mercy which appears in the Chinese laws with admiration. An order for the execution of a criminal is carried from court by slow journeys of six miles a day, but a pardon is sent down with the most rapid dispatch. If five sons of the same father be guilty of the same offence, one of them is forgiven, in order to continue the family, and comfort his aged parents in their decline.

Similar to this, there is a spirit of mercy breathes through the laws of England, which some erroneously endeavour to suppress; the laws, however, seem unwillingly to punish the offender or to furnish the officers of justice with every means of acting with severity. Those who arrest debtors are denied the use of arms; the nightly watch is permitted to repress the disorders of the drunken citizens only with clubs; justice, in such a case, seems to hide her terrors, and permits some offenders to escape rather than load any with a punishment disproportioned to the crime.

Thus it is the glory of an Englishman, that he is not only governed by laws, but that these are also tempered by mercy; a country restrained by severe laws, and those, too, executed with severity (as in Japan), is under the most terrible species of tyranny; a royal tyrant is generally dreadful to the great, but numerous penal laws grind every rank of people, and chiefly those least able to resist oppression—the poor.

It is very possible thus for a people to become slaves to laws of their own enacting, as the Athenians were to those of Draco. "It might first happen," says the historian, "that men with peculiar talents for villainy attempted to evade the ordinances already established; their practices, therefore, soon brought on a new law levelled against them; but the same degree of cunning which had taught the knave to evade the former statutes, taught him to evade the latter also; he flew to new shifts, while justice pursued with new ordinances; still, however, he kept his proper distance, and whenever one crime was judged penal by the state, he left committing it, in order to practise some unforbidden species of villainy. Thus the criminal against whom the threatenings were denounced always escaped free, while the simple rogue alone felt the rigour of justice. In the meantime, penal laws became numerous; almost every person in the state, unknowingly, at different times offended, and was every moment subject to a malicious prosecution." In fact, penal laws, instead of preventing crimes, are generally enacted after the commission; instead of repressing the growth of ingenious villainy, only multiply deceit, by putting it upon new shifts and expedients of practising with impunity.

Such laws, therefore, resemble the guards which are sometimes imposed upon tributary princes, apparently, indeed, to secure them from danger, but, in reality, to confirm their captivity.

Penal laws, it must be allowed, secure property in a state, but they also diminish personal security in the same proportion: there is no positive law, how equitable soever, that may not be sometimes capable

of injustice. When a law enacted to make theft punishable with death happens to be equitably executed, it can at best only guard our possessions; but when, by favour or ignorance, justice pronounces a wrong verdict, it then attacks our lives, since, in in such a case, the whole community suffers with the innocent victim: if, therefore, in order to secure the effects of one man, I should make a law which should take away the life of another, in such a case, to attain a smaller good, I am guilty of a greater evil; to secure society in the possession of a bauble, I render a real and valuable possession precarious. And indeed the experience of every age may serve to vindicate the assertion. No law could be more just than that called *lesæ majestatis*, when Rome was governed by Emperors: it was but reasonable, that every conspiracy against the administration should be detected and punished: yet what terrible slaughters succeeded in consequence of its enactment; proscriptions, stranglings, poisonings, in almost every family of distinction; yet all done in a legal way—every criminal had his trial, and lost his life by a majority of witnesses.

And such will ever be the case, where punishments are numerous, and where a weak, vicious, but above all, where a mercenary magistrate is concerned in their execution: such a man desires to see penal laws increased, since he too frequently has it in his power to turn them into instruments of extortion; in such hands, the more laws, the wider means, not of satisfying justice, but of satiating avarice.

A mercenary magistrate, who is rewarded in proportion, not to his integrity, but to the number he convicts, must be a person of the most un-

blemished character, or he will lean on the side of cruelty; and when once the work of injustice is begun, it is impossible to tell how far it will proceed. It is said of the hyæna, that, naturally, it is no way ravenous; but when once it has tasted human flesh, it becomes the most voracious animal of the forest and continues to persecute mankind ever after. A corrupt magistrate may be considered as a human hyæna: he begins, perhaps, by a private snap, he goes on to a morsel among friends, he proceeds to a meal in public, from a meal he advances to a surfeit, and at last sucks blood like a vampire.

Not into such hands should the administration of justice be intrusted, but to those who know how to reward as well as to punish. It was a fine saying of Nangfu the emperor, who, being told that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of the distant provinces, "Come, then, my friends," said he, "follow me, and I promise you that we shall quickly destroy them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. "How!" cries his first minister, "is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed, and behold you have pardoned all, and even caressed some!"—"I promised," replied the emperor with a generous air, "to *destroy* my enemies; I have fulfilled my word, for see they are enemies no longer; I have made friends of them."

This, could it always succeed, were the true method of destroying the enemies of the state; well

it were, if rewards and mercy alone could regulate the commonwealth: but since punishments are sometimes necessary, let them at least be rendered terrible, by being executed but seldom; and let Justice lift her sword rather to terrify than revenge. —Adieu.

XXX.

The Ladies' Trains Ridiculed.

I have as yet given you but a short and imperfect description of the ladies of England. Woman, my friend, is a subject not easily understood, even in China; what, therefore, can be expected from my knowledge of the sex, in a country where they are universally allowed to be riddles, and I but a stranger?

To confess a truth, I was afraid to begin the description, lest the sex should undergo some new revolution before it was finished; and my picture should thus become old before it could well be said, to have ever been new. To-day they are lifted upon stilts; to-morrow they lower their heels, and raise their heads: their clothes at one time are bloated out with whalebone; at present they have laid their hoops aside, and are become as slim as mermaids. All, all is in a state of continual fluctuation, from the mandarine's wife who rattles through the street in her chariot, to the humble sempstress who clatters over the pavement in iron-shod pattens.

What chiefly distinguishes the sex at present is the train. As a lady's quality or fashion was once

determined here by the circumference of her hoop, both are now measured by the length of her tail. Women of moderate fortunes are contented with tails moderately long; but ladies of true taste and distinction set no bounds to their ambition in this particular. I am told the lady mayoress, on days of ceremony, carries one longer than a bell-wether of Bantam, whose tail, you know, is trundled along in a wheelbarrow.

Sun of China, what contradictions do we find in this strange world! not only the people of different countries think in opposition to each other, but the inhabitants of a single island are often found inconsistent with themselves. Would you believe it? this very people, my Fum, who are so fond of seeing their women with long tails, at the same time dock their horses to the very rump!

But you may easily guess, that I am no ways displeased with a fashion which tends to increase a demand for the commodities of the East, and is so very beneficial to the country in which I was born. Nothing can be better calculated to increase the price of silk than the present manner of dressing. A lady's train is not bought but at some expense, and after it has swept the public walks for a very few evenings, is fit to be worn no longer: more silk must be bought in order to repair the breach, and some ladies of peculiar economy are thus found to patch up their tails eight or ten times in a season. This unnecessary consumption may introduce poverty here, but then we shall be the richer for it in China.

The Man in Black, who is a professed enemy to this manner of ornamenting the tail, assures me

there are numberless inconveniences attending it, and that a lady dressed up to the fashion is as much a cripple as any in Nankin. But his chief indignation is levelled at those who dress in this manner, without a proper fortune to support it. He assures me, that he has known some who would have a tail though they wanted a petticoat; and others, who, without any other pretensions, fancied they became ladies merely from the addition of three superfluous yards of ragged silk. "I know a thrifty good woman," continues he, "who, thinking herself obliged to carry a train like her betters, never walks from home without the uneasy apprehensions of wearing it out too soon: every excursion she makes gives her new anxiety; and her train is every bit as importunate, and wounds her peace as much, as the bladder we sometimes see tied to the tail of a cat."

Nay, he ventures to affirm, that a train may often bring a lady into the most critical circumstances: "for should a rude fellow," says he, "offer to come up to ravish a kiss, and the lady attempt to avoid it, in retiring she must necessarily tread upon her train, and thus fall fairly upon her back; by which means, every one knows—her clothes may be spoiled.

The ladies here make no scruple to laugh at the smallness of a Chinese slipper; but I fancy our wives in China would have a more real cause of laughter, could they but see the immoderate length of an European train. Head of Confucius! to view a human being crippling herself with a great unwieldy tail for our diversion. Backward she cannot go, forward she must move but slowly; and

if ever she attempts to turn round, it must be in a circle not smaller than that described by the wheeling crocodile, when it would face an assailant. And yet to think that all this confers importance and majesty! to think that a lady acquires additional respect from fifteen yards of trailing taffety! I cannot contain—ha! ha! ha! this is certainly a remnant of European barbarity: the female Tartar, dressed in sheep skins, is in far more convenient drapery. Their own writers have sometimes inveighed against the absurdity of this fashion; but perhaps it has never been ridiculed so well as upon the Italian theatre, were Pasquariello, being engaged to attend on the Countess of Fernambrooo, having one of his hands employed in carrying her muff, and the other her lapdog, he bears her train majestically along, by sticking it in the waistband of his breeches.—Adieu.

XXXI.

Misfortunes of Poets.

I fancy the character of a poet is in every country the same: fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a tea-cup. Such is his character, which, considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.

The poets of the West are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet, among the

numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor, I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban VIII., and called THE RETREAT OF THE INCURABLES; intimating, that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients who sued for reception from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account of the lives of the Western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the ancients: he was blind, and sung his ballads about the streets; but it is observed, that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus, the comic poet, was better off—he had two trades; he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave; and Boethius died in a gaol.

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend, in order to pay for a month's subsistence: he has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language: he dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused

to be admitted into an hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger; and it is certain that the famous Camoens ended his days in an hospital.

If we turn to France, we shall there find even stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas, one of the politest writers and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging his debts, he goes on thus; "But, as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall be disposed of, in such a case it is my last will, that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society; so that if I could not, while living, at least when dead I may be useful."

Cassandre was one of the greatest geniuses of his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence. Being by degrees driven into a hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found amongst them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from him that made him,—"If God," replies he, "has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from him hereafter?" But being answered, that a suspension of justice w. s no argument that should induce us to doubt of its reality—"Let me entreat

you," continued his confessor, "by all that is dear, to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and friend."—"No," replied the exasperated wretch, "you know the manner in which he left me to live; and," pointing to the straw on which he was stretched, "you see the manner in which he leaves me to die!"

But the sufferings of the poet in other countries is nothing when compared to his distresses here; the names of Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden, are every day mentioned as a national reproach: some of them lived in a state of precarious indigence and others literally died of hunger.

At present the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and a generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance, indeed, may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success, till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real

merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune; and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence.—Adieu.

XXXII.

The Manner in which some Philosophers make Artificial Misery.

The mind is ever ingenious in making its own distress. The wandering beggar, who has none to protect, or feed, or to shelter him, fancies complete happiness in labour and a full meal; take him from rags and want, feed, clothe, and employ him, his wishes now rise one step above his station; he could be happy were he possessed of raiment, food, and ease. Suppose his wishes gratified even in these, his prospects widen as he ascends: he finds himself in affluence and tranquillity, indeed, but indolence soon breeds anxiety, and he desires not only to be freed from pain, but to be possessed of pleasure: pleasure is granted him, and this but opens his soul to ambition; and ambition will be sure to taint his future happiness, either with jealousy, disappointment, or fatigue.

But of all the arts of distress found out by man for his own torment, perhaps that of philosophic misery is most truly ridiculous; a passion nowhere carried to so extravagant an excess as in the country where I now reside. It is not enough to engage all the compassion of a philosopher here, that his own globe is harassed with wars, pestilence, or barbarity; he shall grieve for the inhabitants of the moon, if the situation of her imaginary mountains happens to alter; and dread the extinction of the sun, if the spots happen to increase. One should imagine, that philosophy was introduced to make men happy; but here it serves to make hundreds miserable.

My landlady, some days ago, brought me the diary of a philosopher of this desponding sort who had lodged in the apartment before me. It contains the history of a life which seems to be one continued tissue of sorrow, apprehension, and distress. A single week will serve as a specimen of the whole:—

"MONDAY.—In what a transient decaying situation are we placed; and what various reasons does philosophy furnish to make mankind unhappy! A single grain of mustard shall continue to produce its similitude through numberless successions; yet what has been granted to this little seed, has been denied to our planetary system: the mustard seed is still unaltered, but the system is growing old, and must quickly fall to decay. How terrible will it be, when the motions of the planets have at last become so irregular as to need repairing; when the moon shall fall into frightful paroxysms of alteration; when the earth, deviating from its ancient track, and with every other planet forgetting its circular revolu-

tions, shall become so eccentric, that unconfined by the laws of system, it shall fly off into boundless space, to knock against some distant world, or fall in upon the sun, either extinguishing his light, or burned up by his flames in a moment! Perhaps, while I write, this dreadful change has begun. Shield me from universal ruin! Yet idiot man laughs, sings, and rejoices, in the very face of the sun, and seems no way touched with his situation.

"TUESDAY.—Went to bed in great distress, awaked and was comforted by considering that this change was to happen at some indefinite time; and therefore, like death, the thoughts of it might easily be borne. But there is a revolution, a fixed determined revolution, which must certainly come to pass; yet which, by good fortune, I shall never feel, except in my posterity. The obliquity of the equator with the ecliptic is now twenty minutes less than when it was observed two thousand years ago by Piteas. If this be the case, in six thousand the obliquity will be still less by a whole degree. This being supposed, it is evident that our earth, as Louville has clearly proved, has a motion, by which the climates must necessarily change place, and in the space of one million of years England shall actually travel to the Antarctic pole. I shudder at the change! How shall our unhappy grandchildren endure the hideous climate! A million of years will soon be accomplished; they are but a moment when compared to eternity; then shall our charming country, as I may say, in a moment of time, resemble the hideous wilderness of Nova Zembla.

"WEDNESDAY.—To-night, by my calculation, the long predicted comet is to make its first appearance.

Heavens! what terrors are impending over our little dim speck of earth! Dreadful visitation! Are we to be scorched in its fires, or only smothered in the vapour of its tail? That is the question! Thoughtless mortals, go build houses, plant orchards, purchase estates, for to-morrow you die. But what if the comet should not come? That would be equally fatal. Comets are servants which periodically return to supply the sun with fuel. If our sun, therefore, should be disappointed of the expected supply, and all his fuel be in the meantime burnt out, he must expire like an exhausted taper. What a miserable situation must our earth be in without his enlivening rays! Have we not seen several neighbouring suns disappear? Has not a fixed star, near the tail of the Ram, lately been quite extinguished?

"THURSDAY.—The comet has not yet appeared; I am sorry for it: first, sorry because my calculation is false; secondly, sorry lest the sun should want fuel; thirdly, sorry lest the wits should laugh at our erroneous predictions; and, fourthly, sorry because, if it appears to-night, it must necessarily come within the sphere of the earth's attraction; and Heaven help the unhappy country on which it happens to fall!

"FRIDAY.—Our whole society have been out, all eager in search of the comet. We have seen not less than sixteen comets in different parts of the heavens. However, we are unanimously resolved to fix upon one only to be the comet expected. That near Virgo wants nothing but a tail to fit it out completely for terrestrial admiration.

"SATURDAY.—The moon is, I find, at her old pranks. Her appulses, librations, and other irregu-

larities, indeed amaze me. My daughter, too, is this morning gone off with a grenadier. No way surprising; I was never able to give her a relish for wisdom. She ever promised to be a mere expletive in the creation. But the moon, the moon gives me real uneasiness; I fondly fancied I had fixed her. I had thought her constant, and constant only to me; but every night discovers her infidelity, and proves me a desolate and abandoned lover."—Adieu.

XXXIII.

THE PEOPLE MUST BE CONTENTED TO BE JUDGED BY THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE APPOINTED TO GOVERN. A STORY TO THIS EFFECT.

IN every society some men are born to teach, and others to receive instruction; some to work, and others to enjoy in idleness the fruits of their industry; some to govern, and others to obey. Every people, how free soever, must be contented to give up part of their liberty and judgment to those who govern, in exchange for their hopes of security; and the motives which first influenced their choice in the election of their governors should ever be weighed against the succeeding apparent inconsistencies of their conduct. All cannot be rulers, and men are generally best governed by a few. In making way through the intricacies of business, the smallest obstacles are apt to retard the execution of what is to be planned by a multiplicity of counsels; the judgment of one alone being always fittest for wind-

ing through the labyrinths of intrigue, and the obstructions of disappointment. A serpent which, as the fable observes, is furnished with one head and many tails, is much more capable of subsistence and expedition than another which is furnished with but one tail and many heads.

Obvious as these truths are, the people of this country seem insensible of their force. Not satisfied with the advantages of internal peace and opulence, they still murmur at their governors, and interfere in the execution of their designs, as if they wanted to be something more than happy. But as the Europeans instruct by argument, and the Asiatics mostly by narration, were I to address them, I should convey my sentiments in the following story:—

"Takupi had long been prime minister of Tipartala, a fertile country that stretches along the western confines of China. During his administration whatever advantages could be derived from arts, learning and commerce, were seen to bless the people; nor were the necessary precautions of providing for the security of the state forgotten. It often happens, however, that when men are possessed of all they want, they begin to find torment from imaginary afflictions, and lessen their present enjoyments, by foreboding that those enjoyments are to have an end. The people now, therefore, endeavoured to find out grievances; and, after some search, actually began to think themselves aggrieved. A petition against the enormities of Takupi was carried to the throne in due form; and the Queen who governed the country, willing to satisfy her subjects, appointed a day in which his

accusers should be heard, and the minister should stand upon his defence.

"The day being arrived, and the minister brought before the tribunal, a carrier, who supplied the city with fish, appeared among the number of his accusers. He exclaimed, that it was the custom, time immemorial, for carriers to bring their fish upon a horse in a hamper; which, being placed on one side, and balanced by a stone on the other, was thus conveyed with ease and safety; but that the prisoner, moved either by a spirit of innovation, or perhaps bribed by the hamper makers, had obliged all carriers to use the stone no longer, but balance one hamper with another; an order entirely repugnant to the customs of all antiquity, and those of the kingdom of Tipartala in particular.

"The carrier finished, and the whole court shook their heads at the innovating minister; when a second witness appeared. He was inspector of the city buildings, and accused the disgraced favourite of having given orders for the demolition of an ancient ruin, which obstructed the passage through one of the principal streets. He observed, that such buildings were noble monuments of barbarous antiquity; contributed finely to show how little their ancestors understood of architecture; and for that reason such monuments should be held sacred, and suffered gradually to decay.

"The last witness now appeared. This was a widow, who had laudably attempted to burn herself upon her husband's funeral pile. But the innovating minister had prevented the execution of her design, and was insensible to her tears, protestations, and entreaties.

"The Queen could have pardoned the two former offences; but this last was considered as so gross an injury to her sex, and so directly contrary to all the customs of antiquity, that it called for immediate justice. 'What!' cried the Queen, 'not suffer a woman to burn herself when she thinks proper? The sex are to be prettily tutored, no doubt, if they must be restrained from entertaining their female friends now and then with a fried wife, or roasted acquaintance. I sentence the criminal to be banished my presence for ever, for his injurious treatment of the sex.'

"Takupi had been hitherto silent, and spoke only to show the sincerity of his resignation. 'Great Queen,' cried he, 'I acknowledge my crime; and since I am to be banished, I beg it may be to some ruined town, or desolate village, in the country I have governed. I shall find some pleasure in improving the soil, and bringing back a spirit of industry among the inhabitants.' His request appearing reasonable, it was immediately complied with; and a courtier had orders to fix upon a place of banishment answering the minister's description. After some months' search, however, the inquiry proved fruitless; neither a desolate village nor a ruined town was found in the whole kingdom. 'Alas,' said Takupi then to the Queen, 'how can that country be ill-governed which has neither a desolate village nor a ruined town in it?' The Queen perceived the justice of his expostulation, and the minister was received into more than former favour."

XXXIV.

The Utility and Entertainment that might result from a Journey to the East.

I have frequently been amazed at the ignorance of almost all the European travellers who have penetrated any considerable way eastward into Asia. They have been influenced either by motives of commerce or piety; and their accounts are such as might reasonably be expected from men of very narrow or very prejudiced education—the dictates of superstition, or the result of ignorance. Is it not surprising, that in such a variety of adventurers not one single philosopher should be found? for, as to the travels of Gemelli, the learned are long agreed that the whole is but an imposture.

There is scarcely any country, how rude or uncultivated soever, where the inhabitants are not possessed of some peculiar secrets, either in nature or art, which might be transplanted with success. In Siberian Tartary, for instance, the natives extract a strong spirit from milk, which is a secret probably unknown to the chemists of Europe. In the most savage part of India they are possessed of the secret of dyeing vegetable substances scarlet, and of refining lead into a metal which, for hardness and colour, is little inferior to silver: not one of which secrets but would, in Europe, make a man's fortune. The power of the Asiatics in producing winds, or bringing down rain, the Europeans are apt to treat as fabulous, because they have no instances of the like nature among themselves; but they

would have treated the secrets of gunpowder and the mariner's compass in the same manner, had they been told the Chinese used such arts before the invention was common with themselves at home.

Of all the English philosophers I most reverence Bacon, that great and hardy genius. He it is who allows of secrets yet unknown; who, undaunted by the seeming difficulties that oppose, prompts human curiosity to examine every part of nature, and even exhorts man to try whether he cannot subject the tempest, the thunder, and even earthquakes, to human control! Oh, did a man of his daring spirit, of his genius, penetration, and learning, travel to those countries which have been visited only by the superstitious and the mercenary, what might not mankind expect! How would he enlighten the regions to which he travelled! and what a variety of knowledge and useful improvement would he not bring back in exchange.

There is, probably, no country so barbarous, that would not disclose all it knew, if it received from the traveller equivalent information; and I am apt to think, that a person who was ready to give more knowledge than he received would be welcome wherever he came. All his care in travelling should only be to suit his intellectual banquet to the people with whom he conversed; he should not attempt to teach the unlettered Tartar astronomy, nor yet instruct the polite Chinese in the ruder arts of subsistence. He should endeavour to improve the barbarian in the secrets of living comfortably; and the inhabitant of a more refined country in the speculative pleasures of science. How much more nobly would a philosopher thus employed spend his

time, than by sitting at home, earnestly intent upon adding one star more to his catalogue, or one monster more to his collection; or still, if possible, more triflingly sedulous in the incatenation of fleas, or the sculpture of a cherry-stone!

I never consider this subject without being surprised, that none of those societies so laudably established in England for the promotion of arts and learning have ever thought of sending one of their members into the most eastern parts of Asia, to make what discoveries he was able. To be convinced of the utility of such an undertaking, let them but read the relations of their own travellers. It will there be found, that they are as often deceived themselves, as they attempt to deceive others. The merchant tells us, perhaps, the price of different commodities, the methods of baling them up, and the properest manner for a European to preserve his health in the country. The missionary, on the other hand, informs us, with what pleasure the country to which he was sent embraced Christianity, and the numbers he converted; what methods he took to keep Lent in a region where there was no fish, or the shifts he made to celebrate the rites of his religion in places were there was neither bread nor wine! Such accounts, with the usual appendage of marriages and funerals, inscriptions, rivers, and mountains, make up the whole of a European traveller's diary: but as to all the secrets of which the inhabitants are possessed, those are universally attributed to magic; and when the traveller can give no other account of the wonders he sees performed, very contentedly ascribes them to the power of the devil.

It was a usual observation of Boyle, the English chemist, "That if every artist would but discover what new observations occurred to him in the exercise of his trade, philosophy would thence gain innumerable improvements." It may be observed, with still greater justice, that if the useful knowledge of every country, howsoever barbarous, was gleaned by a judicious observer, the advantages would be inestimable. Are there not even in Europe many useful inventions known or practised but in one place? The instrument, as an example, for cutting down corn in Germany is much more handy and expeditious, in my opinion, than the sickle used in England. The cheap and expeditious manner of making vinegar, without previous fermentation, is known only in a part of France. If such discoveries, therefore, remain still to be known at home, what funds of knowledge might not be collected in countries yet unexplored, or only passed through by ignorant travellers in hasty caravans?

The caution with which foreigners are received in Asia may be alleged as an objection to such a design. But how readily have several European merchants found admission into regions the most suspecting, under the character of *Sanjapins*, or northern pilgrims. To such not even China itself denies access.

To send out a traveller properly qualified for these purposes might be an object of national concern; it would in some measure repair the breaches made by ambition; and might show that there were still some who boasted a greater name than that of patriots, who professed themselves lovers of men. The only difficulty would remain

in choosing a proper person for so arduous an enterprise. He should be a man of philosophical turn; one apt to deduce consequences of general utility from particular occurrences; neither swollen with pride, nor hardened by prejudice; neither wedded to one particular system, nor instructed only in one particular science; neither wholly a botanist, nor quite an antiquarian; his mind should be tinctured with miscellaneous knowledge, and his manner humanized by an intercourse with men. He should be in some measure an enthusiast in the design; fond of travelling, from a rapid imagination and an innate love of change; furnished with a body capable of sustaining every fatigue, and a heart not easily terrified at danger.—Adieu.

XXXV.

A Contested Election.

The English are at present employed in celebrating a feast, which becomes general every seventh year; the parliament of the nation being then dissolved, and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our Feast of the Lanterns in magnificence and splendour; it is also surpassed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion; but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkeys, which, upon this occasion, die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement. When a church is to be built, or an hospital endowed, the directors assemble, and instead of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity assemble and eat upon it. Nor has it ever been known that they filled the bellies of the poor, till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds: the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing; but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good humour. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow, and every glass they pour down, serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastrycook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the con-

trary, no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbour without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture; another always drinks brandy, imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor; gin, a liquor wholly their own. This then, furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel,—Whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin, or get drunk with brandy? The mob meet upon the debate, fight themselves sober, and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war; since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.

I lately made an excursion to a neighbouring village, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozen of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed as reinforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face; the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street. By this prudent manœuvre, they took peaceable possession of their head-quarters, amidst the shouts of multitudes, who seemed perfectly rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at seeing their bacon.

I must own, I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people, on this occasion, levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could

perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and a haberdasher giving audience from behind his counter.

But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether I was for the distillery or the brewery? As these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent; however, I know not what might not have been the consequence of my reserve, had not the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out, greatly to the satisfaction of the mob, in favour of the mastiff.

This spectacle, which afforded high entertainment, was at last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob: he made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery; I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs. Deputy and Mrs. Mayoress. Mrs. Deputy was not in the least in liquor; and as for Mrs. Mayoress, one of the spectators assured me in my ear, that—she was a very fine woman before she had the smallpox.

Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen: but what tongue can describe this scene of confusion! the whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and punch. I remarked one figure that was carried up by two men upon this occasion. I at first begun to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand; another made his

appearance to give his vote, but though he could stand, he actually lost the use of his tongue, and remained silent; a third, who, excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer but "Tobacco and brandy." In short, an election hall seems to be a theatre, where every passion is seen without disguise; a school where fools may readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom.—Adieu.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Essay I.

P. 1. Such complaints as this essay commences with have been common in all ages. Horace lamented that

> "Virtutem incolumem odimus,
> Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi."

We hate virtue while alive; we esteem and regret it when it is taken from us.

P. 3. The Temple of Fame forms the subject of a most pleasing adaptation from Chaucer by Pope; and, as he tells us in his prefatory advertisement that "the Poem is introduced in the manner of the Provençal poets, whose works were for the most part visions or pieces of imagination, and constantly descriptive," it may be thought that Goldsmith borrowed from it his idea of calling this essay a reverie.

Addison was the author of a very considerable portion of the 'Spectator,' and of those numbers which are usually considered the most excellent. It would be superfluous here to speak more at length of him, or of Swift, Pope, Steele, or Congreve. But, as Pope has often been reproached, and by some recent writers with great bitterness, for his attack on Addison in the epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, it may not be out of place to point out that in the same imitations of Horace, now commonly known as the Satires and Epistles, to which the epistle to Arbuthnot serves as the prologue, he speaks of Addison with the highest praise:—

> "And in our own [days] (excuse some courtly strains)
> No whiter page than Addison's remains."—II. i. 216.

Nor should we omit to mention that Swift, to whom the 'Dunciad' is ascribed, is the object of Pope's constant praise, for wit, versatility, and patriotic independence.

> "O thou! whatever title please thine ear,
> Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver;
> Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
> Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair:
> Or praise the Court or magnify mankind,
> Or thy griev'd country's copper chains unbind."
>
> *Dunciad*, i. 19.

And again:—

"Let Ireland tell how wit upheld her cause,
Her trade supported, and supplied her laws,
And leave on Swift this grateful verse engrav'd,
'The Right 's a Court attach'd, a portrait sav'd.'"
Satires and Epistles, II. i. 224.

P. 3. *Colley Cibber*, who died in 1757, was the Poet Laureate; and it was perhaps owing to Pope's jealousy of him by reason of his holding this appointment, for which Pope was disqualified by his religion (being a Roman Catholic), that the poet placed him on the throne of the Dunces:—

"High on a gorgeous seat that far outshone
Henley's gilt tub, or Fleckno's Irish throne;
Or that where on her Curlls the public pours
All bounteous, fragrant grains, and golden showers,
Great Cibber sate."

But the sneer or satire was wholly undeserved, (for Cibber, though not distinguished as a poet, was the author of the 'Careless Husband,' and of more than one other comedy of far more than average merit,) and certainly deserved the "black eye" which the coachman here represents Cibber as having given the satirist.

P. 4. This "*whimsical figure*" with his packet of the 'Inspector' is meant for Sir John Hill, a physician, who wrote on a great variety of subjects; and, according to an epigram on him by Garrick,

"For physic and farces his equal there scarce is,
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is."

he must have tried his hand at the drama, though the great actor and manager's description of them may explain or excuse our ignorance of even the titles of his dramas. The description of him as "carrying a nosegay" is an allusion to an essay which he had published "on the method of raising double flowers from single ones."

Ib. The producer of "*some farces, a tragedy*," &c., is Mr. Arthur Murphy, a very miscellaneous writer. His one tragedy was the 'Orphan of China.' But he also wrote several comedies, some of which, such as 'All in the Wrong,' and 'The Way to Keep Him' certainly deserve a higher title than that of "farces," though his best works of that kind were written after the publication of this essay; for, though he was at that time upwards of thirty years of age, he lived till the commencement of the present century. Among others of his miscellaneous works he published a translation of Tacitus, which has considerable merit.

P. 4. The gentleman carrying the 'Dictionary' and the 'Rambler' is, of course, Dr. Johnson, with whom the author (as has been mentioned in the Introduction) was soon to form a very intimate friendship.

P. 5. The bearer of the essays, "rhapsodies against the religion of his country," but also of a 'history,' is Hume, the excellence of whose history presents a singular contrast to the mischievous though feeble sophistries of his sceptical metaphysics. He had just published his third volume, which in his autobiography he mentions as having been received with very hostile clamour, his description of "the reign of Elizabeth being particularly obnoxious"; but, though the preceding volumes had at first been equally ill-received, by this time their merit had come to be acknowledged, as that of the entire work has long been.

Ib. The bearer of the "voluminous history" and of the "romance" is Smollett, whose 'History of England from the Revolution' was a work to which his talents were evidently unsuited; but whose novels, 'Peregrine Pickle,' 'Humphrey Clinker' (not, however, published till 1771), and others, were long ranked among the masterpieces of English fiction, and would still be so, were they not disfigured with a coarseness and indelicacy of which the present age is, happily, less tolerant than its predecessors.

Essay II.

The *Borgia* here mentioned as the son of Pope Alexander VI. is Cæsar Borgia, Duc de Valentinois, a man whose character Brantôme rather curiously describes by saying he did some good and some harm (*du bien et du mal*), the harm beginning with the murder of his elder brother, to the great annoyance (*facherie*) of his father; and to whom Pope, with greater truth, alludes as the very personification and embodiment of all wickedness.

"If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?"

Essay on Man, i. 156.

The Orsini family: "Among, perhaps above, the peers and princes of the city, I distinguish the rival houses of Colonna and Orsini, whose private story is an essential part of the annals of modern Rome" (Gibbon, clxix.). And he proceeds to relate that the two houses were "constant and equal antagonists in the long hereditary feud which distracted above 250 years the ecclesiastical state." Two Popes—Celestin III. and Nicholas III.—were of the Orsini family, who consequently, in the long quarrel between "the party of the empire and the cause of the Church," espoused the cause of the Guelfs, and bore "the keys" on their banners.

If the character of the "late Duke Marlborough" ever were "set up above that of his more talked of predecessor," the author must have expected posterity to become blind indeed. In the year 1758 he was sent by Mr. Pitt as Commander-in-Chief of the expedition against St. Malo, which he found too strongly fortified for him to venture to attack, though he had not fewer than 20,000 men under his command. Lord Stanhope describes him as "a man beyond all question brave, good-natured, and generous, but of no shining talents in the field or elsewhere" ('History of England,' chap. xxxv.).

P. 5. *Confucius* was the great Chinese philosopher and law-giver, who is said to have lived in the sixth century before the commencement of the Christian era.

Essay III.

The expression of Tacitus, to which reference is here made, is to be found in chap. xxvii. of the 3rd book of the 'Annals,' in which the historian is describing the condition of the Empire under the earlier emperors. "Corruptissimâ republicâ plurimæ leges" (laws are most numerous in the most corrupt states), a sentence in which it is worth remarking that Tacitus preserves the name of "republic," though his discontent is chiefly excited by the fact that the republic had long been trampled under foot. Montesquieu was a President of the French Parliament in the latter half of the reign of Louis XV., who wrote an elaborate treatise on 'The Spirit of Laws' ('L'Esprit des Lois'), of whom and of which Lord Macaulay says:—"Montesquieu enjoys, perhaps, a wider celebrity than any political writer of modern Europe. Something he doubtless owes to his merit, but much more to his fortune. He had the good luck of a Valentine. He caught the eye of the French nation at the moment when it was waking from the long sleep of political and religious bigotry, and in consequence he became a favourite. The English, at that time, considered a Frenchman who talked about constitutional checks and fundamental laws as a prodigy not less astonishing than the learned pig or the musical infant. Specious but shallow, studious of effect, indifferent to truth, eager to build up a system, but careless of collecting those materials out of which alone a sound and durable system can be built, the lively President constructed theories as rapidly and slightly as card houses, no sooner projected than completed, no sooner completed than blown away, no sooner blown away than forgotten" ('Critical and Historical Essays,' i. 106).

Essay IV.

The phrase of "the Augustan age," used in reference to any modern nation, is evidently meant to express that age in which the most admirable writers of that nation flourished,—writers as far superior to their predecessors or their successors as the Latin writers of the eighth century of Rome were. Strictly speaking, neither Cicero, Tacitus, nor Pliny belong to the Augustan age, Cicero being put to death several years before Augustus made himself supreme, and neither Tacitus nor Pliny being born when he died. But, in the first place, such a phrase may be objected to, as assuming that there is generally such an age in the literature of every people—a doctrine which may well be doubted. In the other classic country, Greece, there was no such age. There was, indeed, a period during which all the great writers and orators of Athens flourished: but not only did that period extend over one hundred and fifty years, from the time of Æschylus to that of Demosthenes; but the very greatest of the Greek poets, who were not dramatic, flourished centuries before the commencement of that era; and one, unrivalled to this day in his own line of pastoral or bucolic poetry (Theocritus), a couple of generations later. Again, if we examine the literary history of that modern nation which, next to our own, has produced the most excellent writers, Italy, we shall find that Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch, are divided by many generations from Machiavelli, Ariosto, Tasso, and Guicciardini. Indeed if such a phrase could be applied to a dead language, it might still be fairly contended that it was inapplicable to a living one. But there is a still greater objection to our author's stamping the age of Queen Anne with such high praise, even though he somewhat extends it by the rather vague addition of "some years before that period," an expression apparently intended to include the later works of Dryden—(those published *after* the death of Charles II.;) and though, at the other end, it is commonly extended to the death of Pope in the middle of the reign of George II. For, if we compare it with the age of Elizabeth, we find in the latter Spenser, Shakspere, Bacon, Hooker, Raleigh, Ben Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Milton as to his earlier works. And if we compare it with the age of the Restoration we find in that Milton in his maturer genius and grander works, Cowley, Waller, Butler, Otway, Dryden (at all events the majority of his works), Clarendon, Burnet (whose great history of the Reformation was published in 1679), Locke, Shaftesbury, and Halifax, with the great divines Bishop Taylor and Dr. Isaac Barrow. Now in each of these periods we find authors of the very brightest genius, with whom scarcely one writer of Queen Anne's time can

be compared for a moment. And this, indeed, seems to be admitted by our author himself in this very essay, since, while extolling the union of "strength and grace," of "taste and genius," which he finds in the writers of Anne's time, he confesses that "no one writer attracts our attention singly"; but the honour which he claims for them is due to their association; "like stars lost in each other's brightness, they have cast a lustre upon the age in which they lived."

We must contend that such is not the true test by which such a question should be decided; but that what the critic should regard is the power and brilliancy of the brightest, not the amount of light existing in the mass, and that, viewed thus, Shakspere or Milton outshines the whole company, of which Pope is the chief; just as, to follow out our author's simile, Venus or Jupiter in mid-heaven is a more conspicuous and attractive object than the whole milky way.

And we must contend further that, even if it were granted that the multiplicity of authors of merit is the consideration to be primarily taken into account, the age of which our author himself was so great an ornament—the age of George III.—by far surpassed that of Anne; nay, that it may be doubted whether, if the pre-eminent excellence of some of its writers in almost every class of composition be fairly estimated, any previous period of our literature is to be preferred to it. In poetry it can boast of Burns, the most feeling and sweetest of modern lyrists, of Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley; in the drama, of Sheridan; in history, of Hume, Gibbon, and Southey; in political philosophy, of Burke; while in poetry and prose fiction combined it can point to the greatest name in all modern literature since the time of Shakspere—the incomparable Scott.

P. 19. *Sir Roger L'Estrange's* writings were almost confined to political pamphlets. His "more liberal compositions," to which the text alludes, were chiefly translations of classical works, such as Cicero's 'Offices' and Æsop's fables. Spence, in his anecdotes, mentions that Pope rated his style very highly, and on one occasion placed him on a level with Ben Jonson and Congreve for ease and elegance in familiar dialogue.

Ib. Dryden. It is superfluous to dwell on Dryden's poetry; and when our author says that "had it not been for him we never should have known a Pope," he is only repeating what is frankly confessed by Pope himself; but in what he says of the ease and elegance of his prose he anticipates the praise which Johnson gave him some years later in his 'Lives of the Poets.'

P. 20. *Otway* was a tragic writer of the reign of Charles II., whose most celebrated plays are 'Venice Preserved' and 'The Orphan.' In his 'Essay on the Drama' Walter Scott fully endorses the eulogy here bestowed on him, adding that in

pathos he is superior to Shakspere himself. But the great German critic A. W. Schlegel, while admitting his mastery of the pathetic, charges him with great "ignorance of the true rules of composition," supporting his censure by the statement that "he has taken half of the scenes of his 'Caius Marius' verbally, or with disfiguring changes, from the 'Romeo and Juliet' of Shakspere."

P. 20. *Lee* was a contemporary of Otway, whom he survived seven years, dying in 1692. Dryden commended "the vigour of his youthful muse," but his works have fallen into oblivion.

Ib. Rowe was Poet Laureate in the reign of Anne and the first years of George I. Among other plays he wrote 'Jane Shore' and 'The Fair Penitent' (the name of a principal character in which, Lothario, has become proverbial as a synonym for a rake). From one of Walpole's letters (Nov. 12, 1746) we learn that he had the singular compliment paid him of having his 'Tamerlane' always acted on King William's birthday. But Johnson regards his translation of Lucan's 'Pharsalia' as his best title to fame, affirming that there is perhaps no translation that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original.

P. 21. *Sir Richard Fanshaw* was a diplomatist of such reputation that he was employed in the negotiation of the marriage of Charles II. with the Infanta of Portugal, Catharine of Braganza, and was employed in more than one other subsequent mission of importance.

Ib. Lord Arlington was one of the Cabal Ministry; he is the minister of whom Scott makes the Duke of Buckingham say that had he held his court as King of the Isle of Man he would have taught Jerningham (his valet) "in half a day to look as wise, walk as softly, and speak as sillily as Harry Bennet." ('Peveril of the Peak,' c. 28.) But Macaulay in his essay on Sir W. Temple, speaks of him as one whose "mirth made his presence always welcome in the royal closet," supporting his description by a quotation from Clarendon, who records that "his pleasant and agreeable humour made him acceptable to the king"; and from Evelyn, who had "conversed much with him, and pronounced him to be a man of singularly polished manners, and of great colloquial powers."

Ib. Sir W. Temple was the British Minister at the Hague in the early part of the reign of Charles II., and gained a high reputation as the projector and chief negotiator of the Triple Alliance, concluded in 1668 between Great Britain, Holland, and Sweden, by which Louis XIV. was compelled to agree to a peace. Dr. Johnson gives him the credit of having been the "first writer who gave cadence to English prose."

Ib. Locke, who was born in 1632, and died in 1704, is best known in the present day as the author of the 'Essays on the Human Understanding.' But he wrote other treatises also of great

excellence: on Civil Government; on Education; and on the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. &c. When Lord Shaftesbury was made Lord Chancellor, he, having conceived a high opinion of Locke's abilities, gave him a valuable appointment in his office; but the connexion with him subsequently proved a source of danger to Locke, who fled to Holland, and remained there till the Restoration, when he accompanied the Princess of Orange back to England.

Abraham Cowley is described by Johnson as the chief of the "metaphysical poets," who spoilt their works by overstrained conceits, and constant attempts at art, in season and out of season; but the same critic gives his prose, a volume of essays, very high praise as having "an easy and smooth equability, in which nothing is far-sought or hard-laboured; but all is easy without feebleness, and familiar without grossness."

P. 21. *Tillotson's manner of writing.* This great preacher was made Primate, greatly against his own will, by William III. when Sancroft was deprived on his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign. Macaulay attributes to him a great share in persuading the Princess Anne to consent to the new arrangements. Goldsmith's opinion of his style closely agrees with that of Dryden, who, as Congreve reports, "frequently owned with pleasure that if he had any talent for English prose, it was owing to his having often read the writings of the great Archbishop Tillotson."—*Preface to Dryden's plays.*

Dr. Isaac Barrow was almost equally eminent as a classical scholar, a mathematician, and a divine. He was Greek Professor, and Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, and afterwards Master of Trinity College. He died in 1677, at the early age of 48.

Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, of his intimacy with whom Pope makes frequent boasts. In the lines—

> "How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour,
> How shin'd the soul unconquer'd in the Tower."
> *Epilogue to the Satires*, 82.

he refers to his arrest and subsequent banishment for complicity in plots for the restoration of the Pretender.

P. 22. *Shaftesbury.* The Ashley of the Cabal Ministry; the Ahitophel of Dryden's great Satire.

P. 23. *Bolingbroke.* Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, was the Secretary of State who, in Anne's reign, negotiated the peace of Utrecht, and was afterwards impeached for treasonable plots to restore the Pretender. He fled, but was subsequently permitted to return to England when Sir R. Walpole was Prime Minister. His reputation as an orator was unsurpassed in his

day, but that of a writer soon passed away. In one of his pamphlets Burke says, "Who reads Bolingbroke now?"

P. 24. *Leslie*, besides writing several political pamphlets (one entitled 'An Answer to the King') against William's Government, engaged in theological controversy with almost every sect of Nonconformists. Macaulay gives him the credit of having been "of all the nonjuring clergy the best qualified to discuss constitutional questions."—*Hist. of Eng.*, ii. 456.

P. 25. *Redpath* and *Dunton* are mentioned in the 'Dunciad' by Pope, who speaks of "Dunton's modern bed," and, two lines afterwards, couples Redpath with Defoe and others.

> "Earless on high stood unabash'd Defoe,
> And Tutchin fragrant from the scourge below;
> There Redpath, Roper cudgell'd you might view."
> *Dunciad*, ii. 149.

Addison and Steele have been spoken of in the Introduction. And Dr. Arbuthnot was the friend to whom Pope inscribed his 'Imitations of Horace,' now commonly known as his 'Satires and Epistles.' He was the author of what is perhaps the best political satire in the language, "Some Passages in the Life of John Bull," a name which the nation has ever since, with entire complacency, appropriated to itself. By some singular confusion it is usually published among the works of his friend Dean Swift, the still more celebrated author of 'The Tale of a Tub,' 'Gulliver's Travels,' and the 'Drapier's Letters.' I do not know whether in the whole of these essays anything is more remarkable than Goldsmith's complaint of Swift's deficiency in manliness and clearness of diction in political writing; though when the complaint is impartially examined, many will probably agree that it is not altogether void of foundation, but that Swift's postponement of all graces of style to the desire to be energetic and terse, too often makes his meaning somewhat obscure. This defect is, however, less visible in the 'Drapier's Letters' than in his other political pamphlets, such as that on the 'Conduct of the Allies.'

Ib. De Foe. Goldsmith here speaks of the great author of 'Robinson Crusoe' solely as a political pamphleteer, an occupation which, in the changing times in which he lived, brought him alternately preferment and suffering. In King William's time he was rewarded with a place. Under Anne he was put in the pillory, as Pope spitefully records in the passage already quoted from the 'Dunciad.' In the present century Walter Scott has made him the subject of enthusiastic praise, as indeed he especially deserved at his hands, since Defoe was his own precursor in that species of fiction to which he himself owes perhaps his greatest popularity—the historical novel. His 'Memoirs of a Cavalier' may be regarded as the prototype of

Scott's admirably humorous 'Legend of Montrose'; and his 'Memoirs of Captain Carleton' is not only to this day the best account in the language of the exploits of the famous Lord Peterborough, but has the singular distinction of having deceived the critical acuteness of Dr. Johnson, who took it for a genuine autobiography.

Essay VI.

This essay was published in the first year of the reign of George III., to whose recent accession it alludes. And the political sagacity with which it insists upon the advantage of a Parliamentary Opposition, provided its vigilant criticism of the measures of the existing Administration does not degenerate into factious party spirit, is the more remarkable because just at that time the successes of Mr. Pitt's warlike schemes, so flattering to our national pride, had so united all parties that, to quote the language of Horace Walpole, "the minister would no more hear 'No' from a county member than a suitor from an old maid."

Essay VIII.

P. 43. "*In the first ages of mankind . . . the unlettered mind must have been struck with sublime conceptions*," &c. It is a singular coincidence of ideas, if this sentence did not suggest to Wordsworth one of the most poetical passages in the 'Excursion.'

> "The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
> Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,
> Under a cope of sky more variable,
> Could find commodious place for every God.
> * * * * *
> in every grove
> A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed
> Where piety more awful had relaxed.
> 'Take, running river, take these locks of mine,'
> Thus would the votary say, 'this sever'd hair,
> My vow fulfilling, do I here present,'" &c. &c.
>
> *Excursion*, i.

P. 45. *The Salian priests.* They were priests of Mars. Virgil describes them:—

> "Tum Salii ad cantus, incensa altaria circum,
> Populeis adsunt evincti tempora ramis."
>
> *Æn.* viii. 285.

Translated by Dryden:—

> "The Salii sing, and cense his altars round
> With Saban smoke, their heads with poplar bound."

377.

P. 45. "*The Orthyan song*," &c. The best explanation of the title Orthea given to Diana (at Sparta chiefly) seems to be because her statue stood erect (*ὀρθός*, upright). It is not very clear where Goldsmith got the idea of any Greek people habitually sacrificing their children to Diana; on the contrary, she is often described by epithets (*παιδότροφος*, *κουρότροφος*) which rather represent her as the nourisher or protectress of children, though it is true that in the story of 'Iphigenia' she (not a *child*, but a grown-up virgin) was to be sacrificed to Diana.

The Samoieds are the tribe inhabiting the province of Northern Russia, which lies to the east of the White Sea.

P. 46. Milton alludes to the human sacrifices to Moloch:—

> "First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
> Of human sacrifice and parents' tears."
>
> *Par. Lost*, i. 392.

P. 47. "*It is well known that Plato expelled Homer from his Commonwealth*," &c. Goldsmith is alluding to the following passages in the 'Republic' of the great philosopher:—"We must not listen to Homer or any other poet who is guilty of the folly of saying that at the threshold of Zeus lie two casks full of lots, one of good, the other of evil." ('Il.' 24, 327.) And again, "Zeus is the dispenser of good and evil to us" ('Il.' 2, 69): 'Repub.' ii. 379, Jowett's translation. And in a subsequent passage he charges Homer "with a fault which is most serious, the fault of telling a lie, and a bad lie, as when he makes an erroneous representation of the nature of the Gods . . . shows Hephæstus binding Here his mother; and, on another occasion, Zeus sending him flying for taking her part when she was being beaten. Such tales must not be admitted into our State, whether they are supposed to bear an allegorical meaning or not."—*Ib.* ii. 378.

It is not, however, without great reluctance that he thus proscribed him, since in a subsequent passage he says, "I have always, from my earliest youth, had an awe and love of Homer, which even now makes my words falter on my lips."—*Ib.* x. 595.

P. 48. The Stagirite is the great philosopher and poetical critic Aristotle, who was born at Stagira, a town of Thrace, B.C. 384. He was the pupil of Plato, and the preceptor of Alexander the Great.

P. 49. The 'Cyclops' of Euripides is especially interesting to the scholar, as being the only specimen of the satyric drama which has come down to us. "Its distinctive mark," as Schlegel points out, was "a chorus consisting of satyrs, who accompanied with lively songs, gestures and movements, such heroic adventures as were of a more cheerful hue" than those which formed the ordinary subjects of tragedy. "The satiric drama never possessed an independent existence; it was thrown in by

way of an appendage to several tragedies" (Schlegel, 'Dramatic Literature,' c. x.) The subject of the Cyclops was the adventure of Ulysses with Polyphemus, as described in the 'Odyssey,' and, after the time of Euripides, by Lucian.

P. 49. *The Atellanæ.*—Their oldest spoken dramas, those which were called the 'Atellane Fables,' the Romans borrowed from the Oscans, the original inhabitants of Italy. The Oscans, whose language survived only in those farces (effusions of sportive humour), were at least so near akin to the Romans, that their dialect was intelligible to the Romans, who completely naturalised this diversion among themselves at the festivals. On which account the actors, whose regular profession it was to exhibit the Atellane Fables,* stood exempt as privileged persons from the infamy attached to other theatrical artists, namely, exclusion from the tribes. And they likewise enjoyed an immunity from military service.—*Greek Theatre*, edited by Prof. Donaldson, chap. viii. p. 301.

In these Atellane farces we perhaps have the earliest germ of the Commedia dell' Arte, of the improvisatory farce with standing masks.—*Ib.*

Ib. Laberius. The proverb, as preserved by Macrobius, was—

"Multos timeat necesse est, quem multi timeat."
He needs must fear who makes all others fear.

Horace speaks disparagingly of his plays or farces, which he calls *mimi*, and says he does not admire.

"Nec Laberî mimos, ut pulchra poemata miror."

P. 50. *Thespis.* It is singular that Goldsmith omits the *first* line of the passage which he quotes; and which attributes to Thespis the credit of having devised a wholly novel entertainment. The omitted line is

"Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ
Dicitur," &c.

"Thespis is said to have devised a kind of poetry previously unknown." In other respects this sketch of the rise of Tragedy and Comedy is as accurate as it is lively. It may be well, however, to point out that Dionysus is but another name of Bacchus, specially applied to that god as the patron deity of the dramatic festivals.

P. 52. The 'Margites' was a satire rather on a fool than on a rogue. Four lines of it have been preserved by Plato or Aristotle; one of which,

πόλλ' ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπίστατο πάντα,
"He knew many arts, but knew them all badly,"

* Fabula is the word constantly used by Horace for a drama, whether tragic or comic.

found in the 'Alcibiades' of Plato, is the first description on record of a "Jack of all trades, but master of none." No one, however, regards the poem as a genuine work of Homer. Indeed, satire is essentially the work of an artificial and complicated state of society.

P. 52. Eupolis and Cratinus are joined with Aristophanes in the quotation from Horace which follows. And of them Schlegel says, "The old critics were of opinion that Cratinus was powerful in that biting satire which makes its attack without disguise, but that he was deficient in pleasant humour;" while "Eupolis, they tell us, was agreeable in his jokes, and ingenious in covert allusions, but deficient in satiric power. But Aristophanes, they add, by a happy medium united the excellence of both," &c.

"The most honourable testimony in favour of Aristophanes is that of the sage Plato, who in an epigram says that the Graces chose his soul for their abode; who was constantly reading him; and transmitted *the Clouds*, the very play in which, with the meshes of the Sophists, philosophy itself, and even his master Socrates, was attacked, to Dionysius the elder, with the remark that from it he would be best able to understand the state of things at Athens."—*Dram. Lit.* c. xii.

Alcibiades and Pericles are too prominent characters in Athenian history to make it necessary here to explain who they were.

Essay IX.

P. 56. *Michael Angelo*, the great architect, painter and sculptor of the sixteenth century, is classed by Byron in his letters, and also in his 'Childe Harold' (iv. 54), with Machiavelli, Galileo, and Alfieri as the four whose "tombs make Santa Croce (the cathedral in Florence) the Westminster Abbey of Italy."

Ib. Lulli was a musical composer, who was born at Florence in 1634, but who settled at Paris, where he was appointed musician to the court of Louis XIV., and director of the opera. He died in 1687.

P. 57. *Polybius*, though an Achæan, and writing only in Greek, is the most trustworthy historian of the great Punic war.

Ib. Livy, it need hardly be said, was the great historian of Rome, and one of the chief literary ornaments of the Augustan age; though some strict critics accused his style of what they called Patavinity; in other words, forms of expression which savoured not so much of Rome, as of Patavium, the modern Padua, of which he was a native.

Ib. The Psalms of David are, however, universally believed to have "had the advantage of versification" in their original language.

Ib. The Celtic fragments. Macpherson had just published a small volume, entitled, 'Fragments of ancient Poetry translated

from the Gaelic or Erse language,' which, two or three years later, he followed up with the publication of an entire epic poem, named 'Fingal,' which he affirmed that he had translated from a genuine work of an ancient poet, named Ossian. The genuineness of the poem (of which, as 'Johnson points out, 'Letter to Boswell,' dated Feb. 7, 1775, the original manuscripts had never been shown) was from the first doubted, and by most people the opinion of Walter Scott on the subject will be considered decisive on that point. As is well known, his prejudices were all in favour of everything connected with the ancient poetry of the nation; and in a letter to Miss Seward (dated 1805, and given at length by Lockhart in his 'Life,' c. xiv.), he tells us that he had attentively considered the subject, and "after making every allowance for the disadvantages of a literal translation . . . . he is compelled to admit that incalculably the greater part of the English translation must be ascribed to Macpherson himself; and that his whole introduction, notes, &c., are an absolute tissue of forgeries." It should, however, in fairness be added that the present Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Dr. Shairp, seems hardly willing to embrace so unfavourable an opinion without some deduction.

P. 61. "*The memory of Mr. Pope.*" Dr. Bentley's opinion, as expressed to Pope himself, "A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer," expresses the judgment that probably every one qualified to judge of the original has formed of the translation. Pope, indeed, is generally believed to have had but a very slight knowledge of Greek.

Essay X.

This is one of Goldsmith's latest essays, published in the 'Westminster Magazine' for 1773. Shenstone had died in 1763, at the age of forty-eight, but his poetry is of a very inferior class. He, perhaps, owes his admission by Johnson into his list of British poets to the fact of his having been, like the biographer himself, a member of Pembroke College, Oxford; but even Johnson admits that of his poems "he cannot think any excellent;" he was, however, at least as addicted to landscape gardening as to poetry; of which Johnson remarks that "perhaps a sullen and surly speculator may think it rather the sport than the business of human reason;" his disapproval being heightened if not prompted by the fact which he relates, that he so exhausted his means by the embellishment of his grounds that he had nothing to spare for the comfort of his house, but "when he came home from his walks he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof."—*Lives of the Poets*, vol. v.

In his 'Curiosities of Literature,' vol. i. p. 90, Mr. Disraeli

complains of Johnson's sketch of Shenstone, as very unfairly disparaging his poetical talents. And, with reference to his taste for gardening, which is the subject of Goldsmith's essay, gives him the credit of having "in developing his fine pastoral ideas in the 'Leasowes,' educated the nation into that taste for landscape gardening which has become the model of all Europe .... Recently, Pindemonte has traced the taste of English gardening to Shenstone. A man of genius sometimes receives from foreigners, who are placed out of the prejudices of his compatriots, the tribute of posterity."

Essay XI.

Compare Pope's praise of the spider's skill:—

> "The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line."
> *Essay on Man*, i. 217.

In the sixth book of the 'Metamorphoses,' Ovid relates the origin of the spider in one of his most exquisite descriptions, Arachne, 'illustrious for skill, not for her birth,' was the daughter of a dyer of Colophon, in Asia Minor; and, as Minerva was informed, regarded herself as equal to the goddess in the work of the needle; Minerva disguised herself as an old woman and challenged her to a competition of skill. Minerva's embroidery represented the hill of Mars at Athens, and twelve deities sitting there in judgment, with Jupiter as their president. Arachne painted the stories of Europa, Leda, Danae, and other objects of Jupiter's love. Her work was so admirable that neither Minerva nor Envy itself could find aught to disparage in it. The goddess was indignant at thus having failed to surpass her; tore her work to pieces, and with a blow in the forehead changed her into a spider; in which form "antiquas exercet aranea telas," she still weaves her webs. By a family of illustrious Scotchmen, the spider is held in even greater honour than her equality with Minerva could have earned for her; from the legend of Bruce, who, while wandering in the wilds of Carrick, after his defeat in Ayrshire, and the execution of his brother, found shelter on one occasion in a deserted hut; unable to sleep, his attention was attracted by a spider, which was endeavouring to reach a rafter in the roof, but six times failed in its exertions. The seventh effort succeeded, and the little insect attached its thread to the point at which it had so often and fruitlessly aimed. And then Bruce recollected, that he himself had been six times defeated, and he regarded the spider's success in its seventh attempt as an omen that he too might find a seventh enterprise successful. He raised a fresh army, with which he defeated Lord Pembroke

at Loudon Hill, and laid the foundation of his country's temporary independence; and from that day no one of the name of Bruce will ever kill a spider.

Essay XIII.

We are here introduced to the 'Gentleman in Black,' whose character is described at some length in two subsequent essays. Of the poets whose tombs he sees there, Shakspere, Milton, and Prior, require no description, but Drayton's fame is less widely spread. He was a contemporary of Shakspere, being born in 1563, and, like him, was a native of Warwickshire; his chief work is the 'Polyolbion,' a poem chiefly devoted to topographical and antiquarian details, with allusions to remarkable persons or events connected with the places of which he speaks. The charge for seeing the Abbey, being ridiculed by satirists, and at last made the subject of complaints in Parliament, has been abolished nearly half a century, and—

> "The sacristans now are forbidden to ax
> For what Mr. Hume calls a most scandalous tax."
> *Ingoldsby Legends.*

Essay XIV.

P. 91. "*Man, Sir, is born to misfortunes,*" &c. Compare Pope's description of the greatest trial that can befall and be endured in patience by a female collector of curiosities:—

> "Mistress of herself, though china fall."
> *Moral Essays*, ii. 268.

Essay XV.

This humanity to foreigners, even when we have been at war with their country, was never carried further than in the great war between England and France, from 1793 to 1815, when not only did Burke succeed in raising large private subscriptions for the support of the French emigrants, but the government also supplied considerable funds for the same purpose; while tha prisoners, of whom there were thousands, far from suffering the hardships and cruelties "on board the hulks," of which Napoleon complained in his proclamation issued by him on marching from Paris in June 1815, were encouraged and assisted in the display of their skill in every variety of art and manufacture; the pity which their fate excited even enabling them to command prices for their wares far in excess of what was paid to English workmen.

Essays XVI., XVII.

This description of the father of the Man in Black is understood to have been taken, in many of its incidents, from the character and situation of Goldsmith's own father. And in that respect resembles the pictures he drew of Dr. Primrose in the opening chapters of the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' and the resistance of the Man in Black to the proposal that he should become a clergyman was a representation of at least some of the considerations which comforted Goldsmith himself when the Bishop refused to admit him to ordination. So again the position in which the Man in Black found himself as a hanger-on to a great nobleman, is portrayed in the adventures of George Primrose as the humble companion of Squire Thornhill.

Essay XVIII.

In the ingenuity of his allegories Goldsmith must be admitted to have fully equalled Addison, as well as in the art with which he makes each fiction the vehicle of a moral lesson. We have had one example already in the 7th Essay of this selection, and the next will supply another; but it may be doubted whether either is more elegant and natural than this. William III., whose ideas of grace and beauty were all derived from his native Holland, had laid out the gardens of Kensington and Hampton Court in the stiff formal Dutch taste, of which they still preserve the memory. But more recently Wise, and Browne (nicknamed "Capability," from his favourite phrase that he saw "capabilities" in every spot his opinion of which was asked), had introduced the system of landscape gardening that has ever since been in vogue with us; and which Goldsmith lived to see the beautiful Marie Antoinette copy in her garden at the Little Trianon.

"Facilis descensus." Virgil adds Averni (*Æn.* vi. 126), which Dryden translates in a phrase strikingly adapted to the warning Goldsmith means to inculcate:—

> "The gates of hell are open night and day."

Essay XIX.

P. 113. "*In early times . . . the simple inhabitants knew no other world,*" &c.

Compare the description of the Golden Age in Ovid:—

> "Nondum cæsa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem
> Montibus, in liquidas pinus descenderat undas:
> Nullaque mortales, præter sua, litora norant."
>
> *Met.* i. 95.

Translated by Dryden—

> "Happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
> Confin'd their wishes to their native shore."

Essay XX.

"A man of the first quality," &c. This refers to the case of Earl Ferrers, a man in whom an habitual fury of ill-temper almost amounted to insanity, and who had recently been hanged for the murder of his steward.

"The neighbouring country" means France, and "the person still alive" means the Count de Charolais. We read in one of Walpole's letters (date Oct. 28, 1752), "The Count de Charolais shot a president's [*i.e.* a president of one of the chambers of the parliament] dog, who lives near him. The president immediately posted to Versailles to complain. The king promised him justice, and then sent to the count to desire he would give him two good dogs. The prince picked out his two best. The king sent them to the president with this motto on their collars—*j'appartiens au roi.* 'There,' said the king, 'I believe he won't shoot them now.'" And to this passage Lord Dover, in his edition of the letters, appended the following note:—"Charles de Bourbon, Count de Charolais, next brother to the Duc de Bourbon, who succeeded the Régent d'Orléans as Prime Minister of France. The Count was a man of infamous character, and committed more than one murder. When Louis XV. pardoned him for one of these atrocities he said to him, 'I tell you fairly, that I will also pardon any man who murders you.' But it may be doubted whether the expression 'pardon' is entirely applicable, since Lacretelle, though he mentions the saying of the king which Lord Dover quotes, adds: 'Ce fait est certainement inexact; une grâce suppose une accusation, un procès, un jugement; on n'en trouve point de trace à l'égard du Comte de Charolais.'"—*Hist. de France pendant le 18me siècle*, l. vi. vol. ii. p. 59.

Essay XXII.

Prior remarks that "this paper, so creditable to Goldsmith's observation and judgement, satisfactorily explains [among other things] what has ever been, and is to this day, a source of wonder to foreigners, the seeming impunity afforded to political demagogues, and the little alarm excited by popular tumults in England. The same English freedom is the subject of one of his warmest panegyrics in 'The Traveller,' where he apostrophises it—

> 'Thine, freedom, are the blessings pictur'd here,
> Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear.'"

Essay XXIII.

The great Emperor of Russia is Peter the Great, who was born in 1672, succeeded his brother Ivan in 1696, and, though his reign did not last thirty years, since he died in 1725, had made in that comparatively short time great progress in the task he set before himself of civilising his subjects and developing the resources of his empire, thus laying the foundation of the power which during the last hundred years Russia has since exercised in Europe.

"The German empire appears . . . on the eve of dissolution." We must remember that this letter was written in the middle of the seven years' war which Prussia, with the aid of England, was waging against the empire. The prediction, evidently dictated by Goldsmith's clear perception of the incurable weakness of the imperial constitution, does credit to his penetration, though he could not have foreseen the conquests of Napoleon, which were the immediate causes of the dissolution of the empire.

But the paragraph which speaks of the progress towards freedom which the French were making is a far more remarkable instance of his political sagacity and foresight. It has often been cited as a proof of Lord Chesterfield's acuteness of observation that he had made a similar prediction. In one of the letters to his son he recommends him "to attend particularly to the affairs of France. They grow serious," says he, "and in my opinion will grow more so every day. . . . The people are poor, consequently discontented. Those who have religion are divided in their notions of it, which is saying that they hate one another. . . . The army must, without doubt, take (in their own minds at least) different parts in all these disputes. . . . The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government, and begin to be *spregiudicati*, to have got rid of their prejudices. . . . In short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government now exist and daily increase in France." The two passages well deserve to be compared; but in comparing them it must be borne in mind that Lord Chesterfield was a veteran statesman, trained from his earliest manhood in political affairs, and that Goldsmith had had no such advantage. Compare also Goldsmith's description in 'The Traveller' of the light, frivolous, though attractive character of the French people generally; and with the next paragraph, where he pronounces the Dutch "no longer the sons of freedom, but of avarice," compare the lines of the same poem:—

"Industry begets a love of gain.
. . . . . Their much lov'd wealth imparts,
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But near them closer, craft and fraud appear,
Ev'n liberty itself is barter'd here."

Essay XXVI.

P. 143. "*Fortune is ever seen accompanying industry.*" Compare Horace:—

"Te semper anteit sæva necessitas."—*Od.* i. 35, 18.

"Necessity precedes Fortune by compelling man to industry."

Essay XXVII.

P. 150. "*If you would find the goddess of Grace,*" &c. Compare Tibullus:—

"Talis in æterno felix Vertumnus Olympo,
Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet."—ii. 4. 14.

"So the happy Vertumnus has a thousand forms, but all becoming and graceful."

Essay XXIX.

Mr. Prior quotes an article in the 'Edinburgh Review,' on Sir George Staunton's publication of the 'Penal Code of the Chinese,' which especially commends the clearness and conciseness of the Chinese laws, "savouring throughout of practical judgment and European good sense." But this essay, more perhaps than any other written in the whole century, proves the writer to have been in advance of his age. For the maxim which in it he lays down, that while "penal laws secure property in a state, they also diminish personal security in the same proportion," and that a multitude of severe laws fails to increase the means of satisfying justice," was not adopted as the principle of our penal legislature till the very end of the reign. Our code was, indeed, too truly said to be written in blood till the humane perseverance of Romilly and Mackintosh roused a spirit of inquiry, which gradually resulted in such a modification of its spirit, that it is now among the most merciful in Christendom.

Essay XXXI.

P. 161. "*I fancy the character of a poet is in every country the same.*" Mr. Prior remarks that this "sketch is drawn, no doubt, from Goldsmith's own character, and certainly with strong points of resemblance."

Ib. Plautus and Terence were writers of comedies at Rome, but none of their works are original; their dramas are only

what Schlegel calls "translations or recasts of Greek works;" he adds, truly, that they are "negligent in their versification," and that "their language, at least that of Plautus, is deficient in cultivation and polish"—*Dram. Lit.* c. 14.

P. 162. *Boethius* is called by Gibbon "the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman." He was a senator who in the reign of Theodoric (A.D. 493–526) filled more than one honourable office in the state. Being accused of treason and thrown into prison at Pavia, he employed his leisure with composing a work which he entitled 'The Consolation of Philosophy,' "a golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully. The writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of the English kings." (Alfred.) 'Decline and Fall,' c. xxxix. Dr. Johnson, while he pronounced him rather a philosopher than a Christian (Boswell's 'Life,' ann. 1770), yet thought highly enough of his work to urge Mrs. Carter to retranslate it.

Ib. Tasso. Compare Byron:

> "And Tasso is their glory and their shame,
> Hark to his strain, and then survey his cell."

P. 163. *Cervantes.* The mention of Cervantes, the immortal author of 'Don Quixote,' shows that the title of this letter, 'Anecdotes of Poets,' ought to be enlarged. And indeed the addition of the name of Vaugelas, celebrated in Molière's 'Femmes Savantes,' who can endure nothing

> "Qui en termes exprès condamne Vaugelas,"

and of Cassandre, a translator of some of Aristotle's works, whom Boileau makes repeat of himself:

> "Je suis rustique et fier, et j'ai l'âme grossière,"

an avowal which may well explain his poverty, shows that he was led, as he wrote on, to extend his list to every class of literary men.

Of Butler, the author of 'Hudibras,' Goldsmith had a particular admiration; and in an elaborate review of his works ranked him on a level with, if not above, Swift as a humorist.

Essay XXXIV.

This letter is remarkable for the union which it displays of sound philosophy and practical sagacity with views which can hardly be regarded as having any foundation but a strange credulity. To learn from the wisdom of other nations was placed by the wise Homer in the very front of the advantageous results derived by Ulysses from his protracted wanderings. And to travel in order to enlarge the minds of his countrymen by an acquaintance with arts new to them, but practised

in distant lands, and in return to diffuse European knowledge among peoples to whom the comforts or sciences of the West are as yet unknown, is an enterprise at once philosophical and humane. But, though each succeeding generation is so fertile in inventions that it seems hazardous to pronounce any discovery beyond the reach of human ingenuity, it is not easy to read without a smile sentences implying a belief in "the power of the Asiatics in producing winds, or bringing down rain."

It is remarkable that twelve or thirteen years after the publication of this letter, Dr. Johnson urged upon the great Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings, a consideration of the advantages to be derived from an investigation of the "arts and opinions of a race of men from whom very little had hitherto been derived," mentioning especially "arts of manufacture practised in the countries under Hastings's Government, as yet imperfectly known in England either by artificers or philosophers." And it is no injustice to Johnson to suppose that his eagerness for such inquiries was in some degree dictated by a recollection of this letter of Goldsmith.

And a century ago it would certainly have seemed even more remarkable, if, as we have seen in this generation, one of those whose travels have been most extended, embracing the whole continent of North America, Palestine, and Hindostan, had been the heir of the British Crown, the future Sovereign.

P. 173. *Gemelli.* Gemelli was a Neapolitan, who in the last years of the 17th century published a narrative of a voyage round the world, which is here mentioned as having been generally discredited by the learned men of the next generation. But in the present century the man who of all others has been the best qualified to form an opinion, Baron Humboldt, has affirmed in the most positive manner his conviction of the truth of all Gemelli's statements.

Essay XXXV.

The practice of promoting every variety of object, municipal, scientific, or charitable, by large dinners is as vigorously maintained as ever. But the election treating, described here by our author with such exquisite humour, has passed away; having indeed been suppressed by laws never dreamt of when Goldsmith wrote, and when elections lasted for weeks instead of being concluded in a single day. Its suppression is one of the modern changes which men of all parties admit to have been an improvement, since the old practice not only demoralised the constituency, but too often ruined the candidates.

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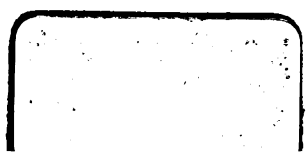
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